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COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA

Built in 1830



STANDARD FORM  
NO. 64

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**FLUVANNA COUNTY**  
**Historical Society**

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Number 13 + 14

October 1971

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**COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA**

*Built in 1830*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Diary of James Galt, which starts with a page captioned *POINT OF FORK, MARCH 1864* and contains almost daily entries until the end of the Civil War, gives in minute detail a picture of life in Fluvanna during the last year of that tragic conflict.

It also gives a sweeping, panoramic view of the war and troop movements, of the great floods on the Rivanna and James Rivers, of the grandeur of the packet boats as they swept to the canal landing twice a day, of the endless agricultural activities on a large river plantation, of county life and church activities and personalities, of gallant soldiers and Southern belles, and of the few social events of the day — a way of life peculiar to the South slowly but inexorably being forced into oblivion.

This small volume was meant to be a typical daily journal, recording farm activities of the seasons, financial accounts, and the weather each day — the severity of winter cold and the disastrous summer droughts. Such a "day book" was kept by many men in those days — not just landed gentlemen. However, by 1864 the war had become such a large part of life for Mr. Galt that war entries were forever taking up pages usually devoted to the planting of corn on Upper Plantation or the harvesting of wheat on Middle Plantation. Some pages are so faded they are hard to decipher, and at intervals several pages have been cut out.

Since it is impossible to publish the diary in its entirety (the great agricultural enterprise is a story in itself), we have chosen only those parts which tell the story of the war as Mr. Galt saw and heard it, and as it affected his family. His entries reveal a deep devotion to his children and his nephews and nieces.

He had three soldier sons, Thomas, Robert and William, all of whom miraculously survived the war; and at least three daughters, Jean, Frances and Mary, who were forever entertaining girl friends and beaux or dashing off to catch the packet for extended visits to friends and relatives.

His brother, William of Glen Arvon, was dead, and his nephews and nieces made Point of Fork their Fluvanna home; he grieved as he recorded the deaths of his nephews. William

was killed in battle at Winchester and buried there; Thomas T., another nephew, died later because of battle afflictions and his uncle buried him in the garden at Point of Fork.

His personal hospitality was incredible, causing the honored general phrase "Southern Hospitality" to fade into banality. November 1864 entries are an example of this legendary hospitality which pervades the whole diary. (Knowing his handsome brick home as it stands today, and even knowing how large it is, one still wonders where he sheltered them all!):

On the 5th "Mr. Goldsborough came up from Richmond on the packet (Charles Goldsborough was at Point of Fork as often as possible and married daughter Mary in November, 1865); the next day the Reverend Mr. Mason came and spent the night; Mrs. Allan and Mrs. Randolph came to spend the day; then came Misses Kate and Pocahontas Robertson on the packet. The next day Mrs. Mason came on the morning packet to visit while Rev. Mason continued to Brems. Two days later Capt. Meade, a grandson of Bishop Meade, came for a visit. Mr. Goldsborough left, and the Bryans of Carysbrook and their friends came to dine. After a month's visit, Mrs. Trigg, Nannie Montgomerie, and Kate and Pocahontas Robertson left on the afternoon packet on December first. Galt notes in his diary: "For the first time for I don't know how long, there is no one here in the house except my own family." But two days later nephew Tom returned with guests and daughter Jean came home with a Mr. Downman as a house guest. Mr. Galt enjoyed the visitors; he was a neighborly man who spoke well of all.

And what of his wife who kept this huge household fed and bedded? There is only one mention of her — on February 28, 1865: "The 38th anniversary of my wedding day. I praise God that he has spared us to live so long and so happily together."

Compared to wars in this century, this war of the nineteenth certainly seems indeed a casual one in which sons dropped in between battles and then hurriedly rode off to rejoin their regiments in time for the next engagement. And though the Federal Army was always camped not far away, there were continual journeys for social visits; and though they might battle on Brook Road or line up guns on Drewry's Bluff, the girls boarded the Packet to Richmond at will.

There are three surprises in the diary. One: There was, of all things, a Naval Depot in Fluvanna County during the war in the woodland of Point of Fork. Never had we seen any other mention of such an establishment, nor dreamed one existed in our hill-encircled county.

Second: We do not understand his statement that the "people of Columbia suffered scarcely at all" during the occupation by Sherdian's men, when troopers were sent out daily until most of the county was stripped almost bare. Why weren't the houses of Columbia plundered, their household supplies taken, etc? Could it have been that the soldiers bought from the merchants and paid with currency more valuable than Confederate money?

Third: Mr. Galt never seemed to realize how poorly prepared and equipped the South was. The thought of defeat never seemed to enter his mind. In other personal accounts and diaries of the dreams, hopes, and fears of those who followed the events of the war from the home front, they each foresaw inevitable defeat.

Despite his Christmas entry of 1864 and his summary of the year's end, he seems never to have fully realized the odds against us. When Richmond fell, he comments, it was "to the surprise of all." The end, when it came, caught him unawares and unprepared to meet such devastating defeat.

True scholars of the battles and troop movements will know how accurate or inaccurate was the information which filtered through to Point of Fork, but with sons in the armies and a continual stream of officers and men pausing at his home to refresh themselves and their beasts, he should have seen, as others did, the approaching doom. It would seem his belief in the South could not die.

But perhaps this optimism and faith is the key to the personality that is revealed in the tiny, faded words set down so long ago with a quill pen and homemade ink.

It is the fashion today to belittle duty to one's country, to search for faults and ulterior motives in all that is or was good and noble in this country of ours. However, there comes alive in this fragmentary diary a generous, patriotic, honorable, Christian gentleman of Virginia.

## DIARY OF JAMES GALT OF POINT OF FORK

POINT OF FORK,  
MARCH 1864

4— On the morning of the 1st was startled by a note from the P.M. [postmaster] in Columbia that the enemy had made a raid within the lines of our Army, had attacked the Artillery at Frederick Hall and captured 80 pieces and that they were on their way to Columbia. It created great excitement, almost every one sending their Negroes and horses across the James River. I did not believe the report, especially that part about their coming this way.

My sons, Tom and Willie went out to find out what was in it; they went as far as Hadensville, brought back reports that they had not attacked Frederick Hall but had struck the railroad at Bumpass turn-out some 10 to 12 miles below, had done but little mischief and had turned back. The first only was correct. Instead of returning, they came across Goochland, got to the River at Mr. Morrison's, burnt his barn, also Mr. Seddon's, Mr. Plummer Hobson's, Mr. Stanards', and his mill and Dover Mills. They then went down towards Richmond by the road and canal; I have not heard what other damage they did on the way. Another party went by the way of Hanover Junction and Ashland; there has been some fighting round Richmond. All the particulars I have not heard, but they were repulsed and falling back with Hampton and his Cavalry hanging on to them.

At the same time another body of Cavalry came round our left and made a dash on Charlottesville, got within 4 miles of it and were driven back. This one appears to have been very easily repulsed. Particulars will be got by tomorrow morning's mail and I hope they will seek to put a stop to such raids, which have no effect on the war and only do injury to individuals which cannot help their cause.

8— My son Robert went to Richmond on the Packet this evening. Tom started with him but a note from Lieut. Hobson telling him that his company will leave tomorrow for Richmond turned him back. Tom has been at home nearly 2 months, Willie 6 weeks; a good rest. It makes me sad the thought of their going, the danger and privations they will have to go through;

they don't seem depressed.

26— My son Robert left on the afternoon of the 24th on the Packet for Richmond to rejoin his regiment, his servant and horses to follow him.

#### APRIL 1864

23— The 22nd was my birthday, 59. Getting old and I feel that I am, yet thankful that I am so well. If this weary war would end, putting an end to so much anxiety, I would regain some ease of mind and strength.

27— Went to the Byrd to call on Mrs. Allen. While I was on my way I twice heard distinctly the report of cannon. I hear that it was heard yesterday afternoon. [Could hear it] this morning from about ten to about 5 in the afternoon. No doubt a battle on the Rapidan. I pray God that it may result favorable to us.

28— No rumor about the firing heard yesterday.

30— No rumor of any engagement on the Rapidan; it is singular. Firing was heard on the afternoon of the 26th, nearly all day on the 27th and again at times on the 28th and 29th, and the only cause for it that we can hear is that they were trying some new artillery. I don't think all that ammunition was wasted on that and that we will yet hear of some engagement. The newspapers publish very little about the army or their movements which is perhaps right, but it tends to keep people anxious.

#### MAY 1864

8— Sunday. Heard this afternoon that the firing that was heard here on the afternoon of the 5th and the morning of the 6th was from a battle being fought on Mine Run on the Rapidan. Began on the afternoon of the 5th and continued all day of the 6th; the enemy being repulsed everywhere and compelled to recross the river. No further particulars heard.

17— Above I said that the enemy had recrossed the River; it was not so. The battle took place in a part of Spotsylvania called the Wilderness. They were repulsed with great slaughter. Their papers say 35,000 killed, wounded and missing. The N.Y. Herald says 27,000 without counting the sick stragglers. Our loss said to be 7,000; it must be more than that.

The enemy moved to Spotsylvania Court House on the



afternoon of the 11th. They attacked our army entrenched there and General Lee says were repulsed with great slaughter on the 12th. They again made an attack with perhaps their whole force in very heavy columns; the fight lasted the whole day. They were repulsed with tremendous slaughter, our men fighting in entrenchments, they charging on them. The slaughter [is] said to be by far heavier than on any field in the whole war, our loss considerable, but said to be not over 15,000 in killed, wounded and missing. Since the beginning of the fight we lost 2,000 or more prisoners. In the fight of the 12th, said to have been surprised in a fog, the enemy's loss I have not seen estimated at less than in the former fight; many think it greatly more.

Several of our brigade attacked the enemy the afternoon of the 14th, capturing 300 prisoners and some colours; I have not seen the no. of prisoners taken by us stated. Lieut. Gen. Longstreet was wounded in the battle of the 6th in the shoulder, not seriously. Several other generals wounded and 2 or more killed, the loss in officers very great.

A picked force of 15,000 mounted Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery broke off from Grant's right for an attack on Richmond; came by Beaverdam Depot on the Central Railroad where they destroyed a considerable quantity of stores. Got within 4 miles of Richmond, on the Brook road; the force in the entrenchment kept them in check. General Stuart with Wickam's and Lomax's brigade of Cavalry followed them and fought and harassed them for 9 days; our force was too small to make a successful attack on them. They got off, going down the Peninsula; they lost a good many men and horses and did less injury than any raid yet made.

Major Gen. J.E.B. Stuart who was in command of all our Cavalry, a brave, excellent officer who has distinguished himself greatly ever since the beginning of the war, was mortally wounded in one of the fights with that party and died a day or two afterwards in Richmond, a great loss to our cause.

My three sons, Thomas, Willie, and Robert were in the two brigades of Cavalry and in all the fights and have been mercifully spared. William had his horse killed under him by a piece of shell, he himself not hurt. Robert, being an assistant surgeon, I do not know how much he was exposed, but the

other two were for 9 days in battles or skirmishes. I feel deeply grateful to God for their preservation.

When Grant crossed the Rapidan, a fleet of transports accompanied by 6 or 8 Monitors & Ironclads with 40 or 50,000 men on board landed at Bermuda Hundred and Port Walthall. They immediately began to entrench at the latter place. This gave us time to concentrate our troops. Several heavy skirmishes have taken place. A report by the Packet today says that a battle was being fought yesterday, the 16th, between Drewry's Bluff and Chester in which we are said to have completely defeated them. Gen. Beauregard commands our troops. I trust that it may be so. The same reports say that Gen. Polk's Corps has reached Petersburg on the way to reinforce Lee. I hope this may be also true. A party of 2500 of Butler's troops made a raid on the Danville Railroad, burning 2 or 3 Depots, doing little injury to the road. They were repulsed at Chula Depot and retreated back to their army; raids are being made in every direction. Averill's troops on the Va. and Tenn. R.R. have been defeated and scattered and he is said to be taken prisoner. Another further West, the particulars not heard of. Breckenridge in the Valley has driven Seigel across the Shenandoah River. Another report that General Johnston has defeated Sherman at Dalton, Georgia, if confirmed, is most important one.

Another defeat of Grant and the enemy cannot recover from it this season and peace, I trust, may soon follow. How greatly God has helped us, everywhere. From the beginning of this campaign we have been successful. How grateful ought we to be to Him the Giver of all Victory. Full particulars have not been received from Louisiana, but even from the enemy's own account, Banks has been utterly routed, this army likely to be captured.

18— Heavy firing heard from early this morning to 10 o'clock or later in the direction of Richmond — I hope the finishing up of the fight and victory reported yesterday.

19— The firing heard yesterday, Mr Bryan says, was not in the neighborhood of Richmond, but from Gen. Lee's army; a battle was said to have taken place yesterday. No particulars heard yet. The fight near Drewry's Bluff on the 16th was not as great a victory as report had us to believe; though our loss was great,

it was a decided victory. We have taken some 1600 prisoners, some guns, stores, etc., the enemy having fallen back to their entrenchments at Bermuda Hundred. The thorough rout of Seigel in the valley near New Market and the capture of his train is in the papers, Gen. Breckenridge commanding. It may enable Gen. B. to cross the mountains and capture some of Grant's trains. Johnston's victory over Sherman is not confirmed. Tho' he had repulsed 4 attacks made on him, the Louisiana accounts are confirmed, all good, tho' not as good as expected.

20— Rode to the Navy Camp to call on Capt. Chatard, the successor to Capt. Rootes, who has been appointed to the command of one of the gunboats at Richmond.

23— Went to the Courthouse with Major Reid, (who staid with me last night) who has been sent up to get supplies, particularly for the sick and wounded. Agents are getting supplies of Bacon, etc., for the Army and I am glad to say that Fluvanna is doing well.

28— Twenty soldiers of the 2nd N.C. Cavalry with 60 horses came here this afternoon and grazed their horses in the field behind my house.

29— Sunday — Seven of the 1st Virginia Cavalry came and grazed their horses; gave them dinner.

30— A soldier staid last night and one of the 1st N.C. Cavalry has come tonight.

## JUNE 1864

2— Capt. Chatard, the new commander of the Navy Camp dined with me today.

3— Mr. Dennison from the 6th Va. Cavalry came this afternoon for Mr. Kimball's horse, which has been here for 2 months or more. He bro't [brought] the horse of a Mr. Wilmarth of Loudon, who has been shot in the leg — Mr. W., not the horse — for me to take care of. A servant of the Reverend Mr. Davis, Chaplain of the 6th, came in the evening and a soldier of the 5th Va. Cavalry slightly wounded in the shoulder.

Heavy firing, the loudest and most distinct that I have heard during the war was heard from day until past 10, and more indistinct after that until 1 or later; from 9 to 10 it was very loud and continuous. No doubt from the large guns at

Drewry's Bluff or from the gun boats; field pieces could not be heard so distinctly.

4— The heavy firing heard yesterday was from a fight near Gaines Mill, said to be victory for us. It was not a general engagement; the Packet did not bring the particulars.

This afternoon Lieut. Jones, 1st N.C. Cavalry came here with 40 men and 134 horses. The horses are grazing in the field back of my house. The men in a Tobacco House. They all belong to Gordon's brigade on their way to Lynchburg to be put out grazing; they were all very broken down.

7— Mr. Goldsborough and Landon Mason left here today, going to join Mosby's party in Culpeper or Fauquier.

9— Three soldiers of the 5th Va. Cavalry got their dinner and had their horses fed.

10— Five soldiers of the 2nd Va. Cavalry came in the evening to stay all night.

11— Two soldiers stopped to get supper and their horses fed. One of them had been here in March. They stated that a battle took place near Louisa Court House today. They heard the firing very distinctly as they came up. The papers have stated that 2 divisions of Yankee Cavalry crossed the Pamunky on the afternoon of the 6th on a raid, that our Cavalry left on Wednesday after them — they probably overtook them in Louisa and hence the fight.

14— On the evening of the 13th, 7 soldiers, cavalry, came and staid all night. On the 14th, 4 came and got dinner and grazed their horses, and in the evening Captain Roper, Mr. Perkins, came and had their horses grazed; the ambulance team grazed.

On Sunday, the 12th, my servant William came from below Richmond; he was on his way to Charlottesville with my son's horse. He heard the firing and the report of a fight yesterday in the direction of Louisa Courthouse and came home. Later in the day reports came to Columbia of a fight and that the Yankees were coming this way, which caused a stampede in Columbia. I went over there and saw the Reverend Mr. Hunter, who was yesterday within 4 miles of the fight [and he said] that we beat them and took some prisoners. Later in the evening, Col. Ashlin came from Bell's CrossRoads, where the fight took place and [reported] 60 prisoners.

On the forenoon of the 13th a report came that the

Yankees were at Bowlesville, some 13 or 14 miles from Columbia and caused a great panic — almost everyone went across the River, carrying as much of their property with them as they could. I could not believe the report from what I heard last evening and could not believe that a force of 6 or 8,000 on each side, with artillery, could be within 14 or 15 miles of this [place] and no report of firing heard. I became satisfied that the rumours were without foundation.

About 1 o'clock Jno [John] Phillips, who is in the 4th Cavalry, my overseer's son, rode down and told me he would bring back accounts that could be relied on — he returned about sunset saying we had whipped on the 12th & 13th and they were falling back in the direction of Orange Court House and that we had taken 1500 prisoners and a great many horses.

This evening, the 14th, Captain Roper tells me that the fighting on both days was very obstinate; on the 13th continued until late in the night, about 2 the enemy were in full retreat in the direction of Spotsylvania Court House, well whipped and routed. We immediately started in pursuit, Gen. Hampton following them, Gen. Fitz Lee going down the road to Hanover Junction, where they expect him to be tonight, and if so they think their retreat will be cut off. I hope it may prove so.

Capt. R. does not think we have taken as many as 1500 prisoners. This I hope will stop their raiding for some time. Capt. R. thinks they were coming to Columbia to break the canal, cross the River as they had pontoons with them, destroy the South Side and Danville Roads. If they had succeeded would have proved a heavy blow, as all the supplies for the army come by the canal and those railroads.

During the excitement of the 13th I sent several trunks filled with valuable articles to the Upper Plantation to be sent over the River if necessary — did not stop hands or teams from their work.

15— Six soldiers of the 2nd Va. Cavalry came this evening.

16— Mrs. Allan came on the Packet from the Byrd, spending the day with us & returning on the Packet in the evening. Rev'd Mr. Randolph, Mrs. R. & Mrs. Minergerode came on the Packet. I sent them in the carriage to Louisa Court House where Mrs. R.'s brother is severely wounded.

17— My nephew Tom returned this evening (Frederick got

home by 2). He brings news of Ewell's Corps passing up the 3 Chopped Road on Wednesday on their way to the Valley and report says to Maryland, to threaten Washington. When joined by the troops now in the Valley will have 40,000 men. The move will break up the concentration of so many round Richmond, by compelling them to send men to the defense of Washington.

18— I think I heard the report of cannons in the direction of Richmond about 11 today . . . An unusual spectacle went down the canal this evening: 4 freight boats filled with some 470 Yankee prisoners passed down, many of them were quite young and good looking. They were part of those taken in Louisa last Sunday. May it be the only way they are ever seen here.

20— In the evening the Revd. Mr. Randolph and Mrs. R., Mrs. Minergerode came bringing Lieut. Hoxton, the brother of Mrs. Randolph, who was severely wounded in the fight on the 11th in Louisa County.

21— The party who came last evening left in the Packet. The Lieut. is a fine handsome fellow. I hope he may get over the effect of his wound. No danger is apprehended now.

24— The teams from here and M.P. [Middle Plantation] hauling in clover hay cut by Mr. Fontaine for Major Randolph, quartermaster. Cut a great deal at M. and U.P. Perhaps at the 3 places as much or more than 200,000 lbs., which has all been put in Tobacco Houses without a drop of rain falling on it. I get 2/3 and Mr. Fontaine 1/3; he pays for hauling his third.

## JULY 1864

9— Soldiers have been here very regularly all the week getting meals and staying all night. Yesterday over 700 broken-down horses belonging to the Georgia Cavalry passed here on their way to Lynchburg. Two died before they got off the place, some others left on the way which I suppose are dead . . . they were in dreadful order.

11— Mr. Hackett, while greasing the machine when it was in motion was caught by it and his foot very much bruised . . . bad when we are pushing to get wheat out for the Army.

28— Six Hands, Frederick & Ned from L.P. [Lower Plantation], Abram and Charles from M.P., Isaac and Moses from U.P. left here to work on the entrenchments near Richmond.

31— For the last three weeks or more I have been troubled with varicose veins in my left leg inflaming. Dr. Nelson has physicked me a good deal for it. My leg is bandaged from my toe to my thigh which is not pleasant this warm weather. I am getting better, but I am afraid I will not be able to walk as much as I have before. I have been but little out of the house since it began to pain me.

#### AUGUST 1864

27— On the 22nd went to Court, returned & dined at Mr. Mason's with Bishop Johns . . . on the 23rd rode with Mr. Mason and the Bishop to Bremsburg to call on Mrs. Gen. Lee and their daughters, called also on Gen. Cocke.

#### OCTOBER 1864

1— Miss Agnes Lee and Miss Mildred came on the 29th on a visit; staid for 5 days.

21— On the 14th, Friday, my son William got home; he was shot in the arm on the Saturday before (the 8th) in a skirmish near Fishersville in the Valley. The wound is not a bad one, no bone touched; it is doing very well.

My son Robert who remained behind with some of the wounded of his regiment got home yesterday (20th) by way of Baltimore and Richmond. He brought bad news of my nephew, William Galt: he died on the 29 September in the hospital in Winchester from the wound near the thigh joint that he received in the battle of Winchester fought ten days before. He was just passed his 22nd year, the flower and hope of the family, a dreadful blow to his mother. Poor fellow, so early cut off; he was of great promise [son of his brother William Galt, deceased of Glen Arvon].

#### NOVEMBER 1864

5— On the 5th sent off 6 hands to the government to work as teamsters, did not like giving them up as my force is now weak for the land. John and Charles . . . from L.P., Charley and Anderson from M.P. and Fleming and Frederick from U.P. They went down by the Packet.

9— My son Robert left today to join his regiment in the Valley.

16— Joe Bryan [of Carysbrook], who was wounded 2 weeks ago with Mosby, and Capt. Tucker dined with us. This was the day appointed by the President for Prayer, giving of thanks and entreating the continued favor of God upon our cause. There was service in Columbia but no sermon or address; a good congregation.

23— The mountains are white with snow, winter is coming on early. I hope it will not be a very severe one, for our army would suffer greatly if it is.

#### DECEMBER 1864

25— Sunday, Christmas Day, perhaps the quietest I ever spent — nothing in our public affairs to make anyone feel otherwise than depressed.

26— Mr. Williams, son of Phillip W. of Winchester, came in the evening, was here some 2 or 3 weeks ago. He is in the Artillery.

31— Thus has come to an end the 4th year of the War; it closes under rather gloomy circumstances. Until lately everything went well with us. At the beginning of the Campaign Gen. Kirby Smith and Dick Taylor utterly . . . routed Bank's expedition up the Red River early in May. Grant crossed the Rappahannock where he was immediately attacked by Lee at Mine Run and defeated with great loss, then followed the battle of Spotsylvania Court House where he was again defeated with immense loss. Then at Cold Harbour the same. Then he crossed the James River and was defeated in all his attempts to carry Petersburg; unless he had been strongly reinforced he could not have kept the field. For 6 months or more he has been lying before our lines, making no progress, sending out a raiding party now and then, which, though they have done injury to individuals, have had no effect on the war . . .

The operations in Georgia have been disastrous to us; the fall of Atlanta, Sherman's march from there to Savannah and its capture; the march of Hood to Nashville, his retreat from it, the whole of which we don't yet know. These coming just as the year closes have been very disheartening.

#### JANUARY 1865

1— Capt. Morgan and Lieut. Breckenridge came last evening and left this morning. Mr. Bryan and his two sons came from



church to dinner.

3— The repulse of the enemy and their immense fleet at Wilmington is encouraging; everyday I expect to hear of their attempting to capture again, but we have had time to send troops and no great apprehension is entertained about it. If Sherman's March northward from Savannah can be stopped, I do not see but what we are in as good or better condition than we were 12 months ago.

I have to record the favor and goodness of God in protecting my sons through another year of war, William wounded in the arm the only mishap to them, for which I am grateful.

4— Ten of the 4th Cavalry (the regiment my son belongs to) came to stay all night. They are on their way home to Goochland and Hanover.

7— Four troopers of the 4th brigade came last evening and staid all night; 2 staid until this evening and took the Packet.

11— Mr. Watkins of the Powhatan Troop stopped here; could not get across the river (high water).

14— Capt. Chatard (from Naval Depot) dined with me.

15— Capt. Welford dined with me. He is engaging corn for the Army, which from his account must be very much in want. The freshet last week injured the Piedmont Railroad in N.C., which has stopped transportation for a few days, so the Army is in danger of suffering. A pity they have to live from hand to mouth. Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Fontaine were here on the same business last week, so the emergency must be great: gave 100 bbl.

17— A report brought by the boat this morning that Fort Fisher had fallen; truly everything looks gloomy for us. Landon and Stevie Mason came to dinner and staid all night.

## **FEBRUARY 1865**

2— Four troopers on their way to their company came in the evening to stay all night.

3— About 4 this afternoon the report of a cannon was heard, the first that had been heard for a long time. I note it to see if it was anything but the firing which goes on more or less almost everyday below Richmond and Petersburg.

6— My son Thomas, who has been at home for nearly a

month, left this morning to rejoin his regiment. Willie rode with him as far as the Court House on some business for me. Painful to part with him, knowing the exposure and dangers he will have to go through. He never flinches from his duty.

7— Landon, Steven and . . . Mason, the latter wounded in the naval fight below Richmond, came up on the Packet this morning. On account of the snow and hearing that his regiment has been ordered to Richmond to march today, returned and will go to Richmond to rejoin it.

10— Capt. Kinney and a trooper of the 2nd Va. came to stay all night.

11— Canal frozen. No packet since the 9th.

12— Four troopers belonging to the 6th Virginia Cavalry came to dinner and to stay all night. Mr. F. Dickens one of them.

13— My son Robert got home to dinner, bringing with him Mr. W. Armistead and a little later Mr. Alexander, a schoolmate of Willie's came, all belonging to the Army. One of those who came yesterday left after breakfast, the others remain, waiting for their regiment which will pass here tomorrow or next day.

22— Gen. Payne and his staff and some of his officers, invited by my son Robert — in all 9 and their servants — came before dinner to stay all night. The Brigade camped about 1/2 mile above the Fork Tavern; it is on the way to the new Bridge Road north of Richmond.

16— The military party and all those who have been staying here since Sunday, except Frank Dickens, left after breakfast; they were gentlemenly men, their visit very pleasant.

17— My sons Thomas and William and Frank Dickens left after breakfast to join their regiments north of Richmond. My sons have been wonderfully preserved through so many dangers in nearly 4 years. Another campaign is about to begin. May God continue His favor and protection to them and bring them, when the war is over, in safety to their home. This is my daily prayer for them.

18— Major Gen. Lomax came to stay 2 or 3 days with us — a friend of my son Robert.

21— Gen. Lomax and my son Robert left in the Packet this afternoon; a pleasant visit from the Gen. and a pleasant one to him, from the attraction in the neighbourhood, which brought him . . . A trooper from the 3rd Va. came to stay the night.

24— Four troopers from the 2nd came to stay all night.

27— Four troopers of the 2nd and 5th Va. came and got their dinner and their horses fed.

28— Three Troopers of the 2nd and 4th Va. came to stay all night.

## MARCH 1865

13— We have just gone thru' 10 days of great anxiety and excitement and am very thankful they have not resulted more disastrously to me and others than they have done. On Saturday the 4th inst. I was startled by the intelligence that the enemy under Gen. Sheridan were at Charlottesville the day before; that a party had been sent to Scottsville and another coming in this direction. It is useless to mention all the rumours that were continually coming in, alarming enough they all were and now and then one was true.

The enemy were at Charlottesville; they burned all the public property there, destroyed the railroad, broke down the bridge across the Rivanna and Moore's Creek, (two very high and fine iron bridges). So far as I can hear no injury was done to the University, or any private property except that they lived on the county and people, taking all their meat and corn — the latter as far as they wanted it — plundering their houses, but burning none. Mills and factories with few exceptions were all burned. On the 6th a party came to Fluvanna Court House, burnt the Mill there and the covered bridge across the Rivanna. That party went to Scottsville, where I believe the whole force had assembled. They burnt the mill and factory and government . . . Houses there; the fire caught some private houses, some of which were burned.

On the 8th we heard it was so that they had all gone up the River towards Lynchburg. They tried to seize the bridges at H. . . and Bent Creek: they were burned by some of our men. They went as far as . . . in Nelson County, where they suddenly turned around and by a forced march of 52 miles got to this place, rather before day on the morning of the 9th. Everyone was thunderstruck; had thought the danger and alarm over. On the 8th my son Thomas and 3 other troopers had come here from Richmond to act as scout and couriers.

My first notice of the arrival of the enemy was some one

knocking on my door and asking for him (Thomas); they went to the basement and took him prisoner and 2 others. Loving and Duke, the other . . . escaped. They [Yankees] soon after came pouring in in great numbers. A considerable body camped in front of my house; the greater part went to Columbia and camped on the hills back of it. Round the kitchen was crowded with them, crying for liquer, of which I fortunately had none, for meat and bread or they would break open my smokehouse. I immediately began giving it out to them and had given away a great deal when Col. Middleton of the 20th Penn. Cavalry rode up and ordered them all off. He gave me a guard and we were not troubled with them after this — they came in crowds to the kitchen where the servants cooked for them night and day.

They spread themselves in their march over the whole County, stealing all the horses they could find, carrying off all the meat and rifling the houses, carrying and forcing off servants. I note my loss at the end of this.

Col. Middleton took up his quarters at my house, which protected everything in and round it; no soldier entering it. On the 10th General Sheridan arrived with the main body and took up his headquarters here, putting out additional guards; more camped here, but the main body went to Columbia. He removed his quarters to Columbia in the afternoon of the 11th, leaving guards with me, who remained until every one had left on Sunday forenoon, the 12th.

While they were here, parties were sent out in every direction, getting horses, negroes, and plundering in every way, destroying the canal as much as they could, and they have done a great deal of injury to it from Tye River down to Cedar Point. It will be months before it will be open to Lynchburg. Except 2 or 3, all of the bridges from Tye River to Columbia are burned. I have heard of none below. They burned the Middleton Mills [Shores], the . . . Houses used by the government at Columbia, the quarters and stables of the James River and K. Canal Co., Jno. Hobson's and Fontaine's Mills. Stillman's [Rivanna Mills] nor the Byrd were not burned. They burned everything about the Navy Camp in my woods, mere shanties.

The General and his officers were very courteous and civil to me; he immediately paroled my son and the next day the other two taken with him; no soldier used an uncivil expression

to me. I think they were disappointed in not being able to cross the River here; it was very high a few days before they came . . . and fell very slowly. I have heard, since they left, that Fitz Lee was between this and Cumberland Court House with Cavalry, Infantry and Artillery, very anxious for them to cross. When they left on the 12th (Sunday), they went towards Louisa Court House where I hear they camped on the evening of the 13th. Slow-marching, they carried away a great many negroes, 300 or more horses and mules. Their number was between 6 and 7000. I saw only 2 pieces of artillery. Many of their horses were very much broken down, leaving and shooting them all along the road. I doubt if what they stole would make up for those shot.

I have lost 13 negroes carried off by them; some no doubt went willingly, but some I know were forced off who did not wish to go. All the mules and horses at U.P. except 2 are gone, the same at M.P. and very nearly the same here. The horses of several friends that I was taking care of were saved. From 5 to 600 barrels of corn were taken, all of the bacon except some 53 or 54 pieces, 3 or 4 oxen, 2 sheep, 2 hogs, 13 bbl. of flour; miles of fencing were burned from below the aqueduct nearly to the line. All the fencing was burned on the house side of the road and about half on the other, from below the quarters and to the public road and across to the branch on North River Field — all is burnt. A good deal was burnt at the Middle, tho' not a fourth or fifth of what was done here.

As I said before my house and kitchen were not plundered, but my overseers' houses were; the one here suffering most, the one at U.P. least. My negroes were stripped of everything of any value they had: coat, pants, shoes, hats, blankets and any watches or money they had and almost every one of their chickens.

At the upper Byrd (Jno. Allan's est.) all of the corn and meat were taken, the negroes plundered, no horses left. At the other places less injury was done; some 8 or more hands from the 3 places (3 young girls from the lower Byrd) went off. The Harrison's did not lose a hand or horse and but little corn; most of all their meat was taken and the house plundered a little. They have got off better than any I have heard of. The Hobson's, Mrs. Pemberton, lost all their horses and a good many

hands. Mr. B. . . the same. The Cocke's the same. Mr. Bryan also the same — some heavier than the others.

From what I hear the people above Scottsville were treated worse than down here. The people of Columbia scarcely suffered at all; most of them said to be the better for the visit. Though I have lost very heavily, I am thankful it is no worse as it might easily have been from their being 3 days on the place and I will be more thankful and satisfied if there should be no further visit from them.

24— There has been only one mail from Richmond since the 4th inst., that brought nothing later than the 15th. The raiding party had not been able to pass our lines and join Grant and great hopes were entertained that they would be well punished before they could do that or get off in any other direction; so may it be. We hear that a good many prisoners have been taken, most of their horses were very much broken down before they left here and they had to pass through a country where few supplies for man or horse could be got.

On the 15th Gen. Roper and about 500 Cavalry passed here in pursuit of them. Gen. Lomax with his division was to be at Louisa Court House on the 17th; both together are too few to attack them, but they can hang on their rear cutting off stragglers, as we hear they have done and that they have taken part of their wagon train and nearly all the negroes they were carrying off.

I forgot to take note that I have got 24 horses and mules left by the enemy. Some will soon do to work, others will take some time — they are all injured in the foot from travelling in mud.

Gen. Lomax and his 2 orderlies, Mr. D. . . and Mr. Thomas, both of Baltimore, came last evening and staid all night.

31— Two troopers came to stay all night.

## APRIL 1865

With only rumours to judge and write by, I can only make a very imperfect statement of the overwhelming transactions of the last 10 days. We had heard of fighting near Petersburg on the 29, 30 and 31 of March; the report was they were favorable to us. To our surprise and consternation we heard on Monday evening the 3rd of April that Richmond was evacuated on the

day before. We could not believe it; it was confirmed the next morning by the arrival of persons running from the city, and the passing of 2 canal boats with a great many of the legislative and state papers.

On the 31st March, Grant broke thru' our lines at 3 or more places and tho' they were said to have been recovered, except at one place, it was feared with their great force they would break thru' again the following day; so to the surprise of all, orders were given for the Army to fall back and Richmond to be evacuated. So sudden and unexpected was it, that Mr. Davis was called out of Church and informed of it. Except those in public employ, but few were able to leave town. I think it better for them that they could not.

The Army (Confederate) fell back towards the Danville R.R.; the enemy got there before them and flanked and drove them up the main Lynchburg road. The Army became very much demoralized, great numbers straggling and throwing away their arms, and suffering dreadfully for food. They continued falling back and fighting until they got to Appomatox Court House, when on Sunday, April 9th, they surrendered, and I hear have been paroled. How many have given themselves up, I have not heard; they say not a very large number, that they had scattered in every direction before.

Gen. R. E. Lee and some other general officers have surrendered. Of course, after this, all or very nearly all resistance will cease. Johnston's army will have to surrender, if it does not scatter soon as it hears of the fate of Lee. Wonderful that an army that has held Grant at bay for 10 months should have been used up in a short week. Most of the men had got tired of the war, had been deserting in large numbers all the winter — they had lain too long in trenches, and in their retreat had no food for 72 hours. Still they say many of them fought well to the last. And so ends the "Great Rebellion" as it will now be called.

## MAY 1865

Gen. Lee surrendered his whole Army; it is said there were only about 8000 muskets present, the others were scattered over the country. The Army was demoralized before it left Petersburg, or it might have made good the retreat. The

conditions were: the men to give up their arms, their private property to be respected, the officers to retain their side arms, the Cavalry their horses. The terms were respected and the conduct of the enemy very kind and conciliatory. Rations were immediately sent to our troops and no exultation or offensive words or acts shown. All were paroled, those who were taken prisoners before the surrender were sent North.

Gen. Johnston's army surrendered about 3 weeks later on the same conditions. Gen. Sherman was disposed to be more lenient than Gen. Grant; his terms were rejected by his Government and those to Gen. Lee substituted. I think all have surrendered this side of the Mississippi; those west of it will soon do the same.

President Lincoln was assassinated on the 14th of April when attending the theatre in Washington by J. B. Booth, a Marylander; a great misfortune to the South as I believe he was more favorably inclined to us than any other of the politicians. I hope his successor may prove favorable, tho' it is doubted; but we will see.

## OCTOBER 1865

I have had no heart to continue my notes; the sudden and to me unexpected collapse of the war — I ought to say Rebellion, as it is now called (and by many who were loud in crying for secession!) — somewhat demoralized me, and the State of our affairs has not yet been such as to let me get quite over it. Besides, my health has not been as good as usual this summer. Soon after the surrender of Gen. Lee, a party of Cavalry and infantry came to Columbia, the latter from Connecticut, under Lt. Col. Brown. They did harm by the way they talked . . . after the middle of June they were succeeded by others from Penn. who did better and kept good order and that has been continued until this time.

. . . On the surrender of General Lee's army the negroes were declared all free, some of them have left; others, who had run away, returned. Some I would not let remain. There are still over 200 left, scarcely over 1/4 of whom do any work, and with some exceptions none do more than they can help. Still, taking everything into consideration they have behaved better than one could have supposed, an ignorant race suddenly set free and



whose only notion of freedom was to live and not work. They are getting somewhat over this. The coming winter will cure a great many. Out of the 4,000,000 that were in the South at the beginning of the war, it is not supposed that over 3,000,000 are alive. Their fate is that of the Indian. Fifty years hence there will be comparatively few of them left.

When the city of Richmond was evacuated, the authorities had the tobacco warehouses and some other public buildings set on fire. The wind carried the flames from house to house until 1000 houses, some say more, were destroyed and in almost every case everything that was in them. The whole business part of the city was destroyed, utterly ruining many people. Whoever ordered it ought to be held in execration. The little benefit it would have done to the Federal government, even if they had confiscated the tobacco, etc., which they have not done in other places, was nothing, a mere nothing to them, compared to the people of Richmond.

My 6 houses in Richmond were burned; 61 hogsheads of tobacco, the crop of 1861 — the last I made — even burned. Every bank was burned down, their stock not worth a cent, not a bit better than Confederate bonds. A great many houses are being built . . . in a few years the whole will be rebuilt, a result that was not expected 6 months ago.

In September I left home and attended the meeting of the Council of the Prot. Episcopal Church of Virginia . . . on 23rd left for Philadelphia (trousseau for daughter Mary) . . . on to Baltimore (to visit the family of his prospective son-in-law). On the 3rd I went to Washington, applied for and got my pardon: all those whose property was valued over 20  $\tilde{m}$ . dollars were exempt from pardon under the President's proclamation of the 29th May, 1865. . .

I may as well note that a convention of Delegates from the Senatorial District of Albemarle, Buckingham, Fluvanna and Goochland met at Palmyra on the 25th of September and I was unanimously nominated to represent the District. There was no opposition. The election took place on Thursday the 12th October and I was elected by the following vote: Albemarle 682, Buckingham 442, Fluvanna and Goochland 194.

The vote is a very small one, there was very little interest felt in any of the elections, to Congress or the Legislature; the

Oath required by the Act of Congress for all to take before they can take their seat, that scarcely one could be found who could conscientiously take it —

I am, of course, very much gratified at the compliment, the honor, paid me; it was altogether unexpected, no one could be more surprised than I was, when I heard of it in Phila. I have never at any time taken any active part in politics, rather the contrary, so I suppose it was my course during the War, never refusing a meal or a night's lodging to a soldier or help to any poor person, together with a character which has never been reproached during a 30 year residence in the County.

**Ed. Note:** *Mr. Galt's special pardon under the proclamation of May 29, 1865 is signed by President Johnson and preserved at the University of Virginia. At that time certain persons belonging to 14 classes were not granted a general pardon or amnesty, but were allowed to "make special application to the President. . . ." "By obtaining [this] pardon civil rights were recovered, further confiscation of property was prevented, and voting rights were re-established." [From papers of the U.S. State Department].*

*Mr. Galt notes that "the Oath required. . . for all to take before they can take their seat [is such] that scarcely one could be found who could conscientiously take it," so we conclude that because of his special pardon, he was not required to sign the amnesty oath demanded of most citizens at that time.*

*Mr. Galt was a practical and conscientious man, and by October, 1865 had faced the realities of defeat enough to apply for special pardon under the new laws. This action had unexpected results: he was one of the few men in the whole area qualified to serve his people by representing them in the General Assembly. He served during the 1865/66 and 1866/67 sessions.*

## POINT OF FORK – HOME OF JAMES GALT

Point of Fork derives its name from its situation at the fork of the Rivanna (North) River and the James (Fluvanna) Rivers.

The Point has been a famous site since Captain John Smith drew his map of the up-country and marked a spot at the fork as Rausawek, capital of the Indian Monacan nation. Tradition holds that one of their chieftains, famous for his successful raids against the Iroquois, was buried under the venerable old oak near the present gate to the Point of Fork mansion.

When the American colonies decided to strike for independence, the Point, then owned by David Ross, again became important as a strategic post with training grounds, barracks, a supply depot, and an important arsenal where military weapons were made.

The Point of Fork Plantation House still stands today upon the highland in the Fork, facing a bend in the James and commanding a beautiful view of the river for miles. Those guest-laden packet boats could have been seen "from a long way off!"

The grounds were always extensive, planted with a variety of handsome trees. On the river lawn were planted two Cedars of Lebanon, and it is thought that the remaining tree is one of the few specimens of such age to be found in America.

A detailed description and sketch of the formal garden is included in *Historical Gardens of Virginia*, published by the James River Garden Club in the 1920's. The six terraces of the garden faced southwest, the banks planted with Florentine orris. In the level beds vegetables, berries, fruits and flowers mixed amicably. Fruit trees and ornamentals for garden and grounds were brought from many countries of the world, and some varieties have survived the years.

The boxwood have grown to be giants and are the beauty of the lawn today; the terraces shown in the sketch made for the Garden Club still indent the gentle slope. The sketch shows the "old grave yard" in the upper left-hand corner of the lowest terrace. This must be where James Galt buried his nephew, Thomas T., who died July 22, 1866, a victim of afflictions suffered during the war.

The house is essentially the same today as it was when James Galt opened its doors to that never-ending stream of visitors. How did he shelter them all? There are generous halls in the English basement and in the two upper floors. The east rooms on the middle floor are now one long handsome drawing room, but at one time they were divided by sliding doors. This makes a total of eleven large rooms (and a small wine cellar or storage room in the basement).

The kitchen, of course, was in the yard; the dining room, in the basement; so one conjectures there were six main bedrooms, (and there are rooms in the basement that could have been used for bedrooms). Any one of those big high-ceilinged rooms could have held two four-posters, a cradle, wardrobe, chests or washstand and still have seemed spacious.

The Galt homes, Point of Fork and Glen Arvon, big and square with hip roofs, are unique in many ways. Across the garden front of each is a long two-story veranda supported by immense round pillars. Between the Doric capitals and the cornice is a wide plain frieze. The cornice is deep and handsomely decorated and continues around the house under the entire roof. Above the dentils is a carved egg-and-dart fascia, and directly under the roof are the unusual square "Greek" decorations called promothos.

The mansions have been described as "Georgian," but of all the houses of Fluvanna County, they alone project the image of the old plantation homes of the deep South. Perhaps this illusion is increased by the fact that the drive sweeps up to the wide portico across the entire front, with the grandeur of white columns rising to the roof. Perhaps the term "Greek Revival" would apply to these houses.

The red brick is laid in Flemish bond with two unusual features. The basement is mostly above ground level, and where there might have been placed a brick water table at the level of the first floor, there is a projecting marble belt course. Usually such projecting belts were used as a decoration between the two top floors on some very old American brick homes, and according to Fiske Kimball, were common until 1810. He also once stated that a subdivision of three stories by a single band above the ground was made sometimes to suggest an architectural basement, even when no order was used above. It

would seem that a marble belt course so placed is rare on brick houses in Virginia.

The other unusual feature is that rectangular white cement inserts were placed above the windows of the middle floor (just below the upper windows). They are not often seen in Virginia's fine homes, though they were included in the design of Woodlawn (c. 1800-1805) that George Washington built for his step-granddaughter, and Mirador in Albemarle (c. 1825), childhood home of Lady Astor.

The slate-covered roof was once crowned with a deck of wooden balustrades as were many large homes which were relatively square. The four chimneys are flush with the walls, so the fireplaces project into the room, increasing their interest as a focal point and center of hospitality. Most of the old homes in Fluvanna have windows with six panes in one sash and nine in the other; and though the panes appear to be old glass, there are but six panes in each sash at Point of Fork.

The double front doors have decorative panes of glass on each side and above to give light to the hall. Below the upper window is a small iron balcony. The river-front door is somewhat similar, but there is a smaller porch.

The wide center hall is one of the grandest features of the house, divided by a beautifully proportioned keystone arch, carved and panelled. The elliptical stairway rises from the garden front, a graceful line when viewed from any part of the hall or drawing room. The woodwork throughout the house is decorative, an example of fine workmanship. The mantels were originally marble.

All the rooms have been beautifully furnished with antiques by the present owners, Dr. and Mrs. Russell N. Snead, but it is the long drawing room that stirs the imagination, for here they allowed the past to linger undisturbed. With its carved mantels and Corinthian pillars, it is an elegant room. The two free-standing columns, which suggest a room of two sections, are joined by a beautifully carved beam. Against each wall is a fluted Corinthian pilaster which matches the pilasters supporting the mantels. The carved mantels are exquisite, with center plaques depicting the dance of the Muses.

It is believed that the pillars and mantels were added after the Galt's had sold Point of Fork. Still later, a mistress of Point

of Fork placed a pier glass between two windows and hung a crystal chandelier. These have remained in the house so long that they lend romance to accentuate the long history of the house and the love bestowed upon it by its successive owners.

### **"The Keepers of the House"**

The history of a house is made by the people who call it "home," so we include this tentative list of the owners of Point of Fork mansion, and the year they purchased it. (One source lists General Lindsay Walker as an owner, but we could not find proof of this.)

Heirs of James Galt

W. Scott Walker – 1890-91

Henri and Odille Davin – 1893

Thomas H. and Louisa Walker – 1897

General Thomas Muldrup Logan, Trustee, 1902 [One source indicates he was trustee for his daughter, Mrs. Hartwell Cabell.]

J. Alston Cabell – 1909

Uxbridge Worsted Company – 1945 (Purchased from Ethel Hoyt Cabell, widow.)

Bachman Uxbridge Worsted Corporation – 1948

Chester W. and Mabel R. Armentrout – 1950

Dr. Russell N. and Frances W. Snead – 1956

—Deed Books of Fluvanna County

## THE GALT FAMILY

The "first" William Galt migrated to Virginia from Scotland, perhaps in early youth, and later became associated in business in Richmond with the husband of his niece, John Allan (foster-father of Edgar Allan Poe). With Allan, he became a very wealthy export merchant, so successful that in later years a Fluvanna expression came into vogue: "as rich as Galt!"

The earliest record of William that we can find in Fluvanna shows that he acquired property near Columbia. The deed lists thirty slaves by name, including the valuable "Jack the Carpenter, eight horses, five mules, twenty-five head of cattle, thirty-two heads of Hogs," and the whole merchandise of a store in Columbia.

He acquired more land in Fluvanna from William Holland in December, 1806 (175 acres) and in 1810, 214 acres from Benjamin Weaver. By the time of his death in 1826, he owned three adjoining plantations in the fork of the Rivanna and James, over 6,000 acres. According to family tradition, he secured this huge tract directly from the legendary David Ross. He never married. He made his home in Richmond and never resided in Fluvanna.

William Galt had three great-nephews, William, James, and Robert (James and Robert were twins). He brought the three orphan great-nephews to America, but it is said that Robert died on board ship. William, the oldest, remained in America, but James was sent back to Scotland to school with Edgar Allan Poe.

At the time of the death of his great-uncle, in 1826, our James Galt was still a subject of Scotland, "and so may not according to law be capable of holding real estate." However, his brother, William, had become a citizen, so brother William and John Allan of Richmond were executors of the estate of the first William.

The executors' report of 1828 reads "whereas the said James Galt on or about the 28th day of November last was admitted a citizen of the United States of America and is entitled to hold real estate in fee by the laws of Virginia. . ." received with his brother William, according to the wording of the will of the first William, "an equal moiety in value of my

said landed estate named 'The Fork.' "

By this will James also received "the following real estate in the city of Richmond, to wit, my parcel of Land on 13th Street whereon is a tenement occupied by Shepherd & Pollard and a Lumber House occupied by Otis Dunlap and Co., . . . corner of East and 13th Street and the piece of Land adjoining Poore's property which I purchased of Gallegar's estate. . .with the appurtenances. . ."

In 1834 William and James agreed to divide their Fluvanna river property with the help of impartial business men, and it was divided in 1838. The division was recorded in the Clerk's Office the 24th day of February, 1840.

The first William had divided his property into three working plantations and the nephews agreed that William should have the plantation lying farthest west, and James the eastern plantation in the fork of the rivers. They agreed to split the middle plantation. Two people were "to run the dividing line, giving as nearly as they could. . .an equal proportion in value of the Estate to each."

Three persons were selected for the division of the personal estate who "should value the Negroes, Horses, stock, etc.; the property on the upper and lower Plantations to remain as they were at the date of the 1834 agreement with the exception of the two Carpenters and two Blacksmiths and their families, one of each with their families to be laid off to each division of the Estate. . .the two divisions to be equalized from the Middle Plantation - Negroes, Stock, etc."

From the total Fork estate William received 3,031 acres; 369 acres of lowground, 2,662 acres of high land. He received 114 slaves and from Middle his half of cattle, tools and machinery to equalize.

James Galt received 2,921 acres of land, consisting of 359 acres of lowground and 2,562 acres of highland. (Within his boundaries "but forming no part of it, supposed to contain 24 or 25 acres of land, called the Barracks Tract, claimed and owned by Samuel P. Pettit.) Alloted to "said James [were] certain Negroes and personal property on the Lower Plantation, together with the portions of each that were added from Middle Plantation to equalize the division." He received a total of 113 slaves, and his half of cattle, tools and machinery from Middle.



There is no mention in the division of houses or furniture.

They retained as joint property the 33½ acres on which the first William had built a mill on Crooks Creek near the center of the property. They owned and held jointly the mill pond and grist and saw mill, and "a certain Negro Slave named Bartlett, who is the Miller."

It is interesting that the brothers both married ladies named Mary, but William Galt's wife is always referred to in the records as Mary Bell, or Mrs. M. B. William named his estate Glen Arvon; James called his Point of Fork.

William died by 1851, and at first Mary Bell gave James power of attorney. In his diary James mentions only two of William's sons — soldiers — but there was a third referred to in the records and his mother's will as James K. By 1858 James K. and his mother were in charge of the estate. It seems mounting debts forced them to sell part of the plantation and twice to sell their personal effects. By 1859 Glen Arvon was sold. (There were four or five daughters. Lucy, who married William H. Holman, spent much time at Point of Fork.)

James Galt divided his estate, Point of Fork, into three working plantations as had his uncle before him. He was, of course, ruined financially by the war and by the time of his death in 1875 was deeply in debt. It is a surprise, but in his will, dated 16th of August, 1875, he mentions three sons not mentioned in the diary.

Malcolm may have been too young to fight in the war, for the will requests that the estate purchase "a gold watch and chain such as had been given his Brothers," and which had been promised Malcolm when he came of age.

Family tradition holds that a son named James died in early infancy, so the father's name was given to another son. The will states that James is buried "next to my beloved and honored wife," and Galt requested that good substantial monuments, not costly, be placed over their graves and his.

His son John Allan Galt had gone to Texas the 28th of November, 1858 with \$750 and in 1860 his father lent him \$2000 to invest in Texas, which John Allan promptly lost. Mr. Galt's will states that "these payments and his clothes are more than his services are worth, for no estate could be more unprofitably managed than the Middle has been under him."

Nevertheless, he made John Allan trustee for William's portion of the estate and he also named John Allan an executor of his estate with son Thomas C. and son-in-law Charles Goldsborough.

Thomas C. was the only son who married, and at one time lived on a part of the place called Fork Place. At one time he lived in the Point of Fork Mansion; he may also have lived on part of the property called Gale Hill, for here he was buried.

Mary was the only daughter who married and she received most of the furniture and the family portraits. She and her husband, Charles Goldsborough, lived in Baltimore, but they must have come to Point of Fork for long visits. The next farm up the James is called "Goldsborough" today.

Goldsborough was a lawyer and managed the entire estate for fifteen years. He tried to pay off the debts — sometimes selling land or personal effects. When the estate was settled in 1891, Thomas, Mary, Malcolm, William and John Allan were still living, but Jean, Frances, and Robert were dead. So Point of Fork was meticulously divided; the beautifully colored plats cover many pages of the old deed books in the Fluvanna county office.

But James Galt had really settled it all before he died for his will ends: "In case of any difficulty or misunderstanding between any of my children respecting the meaning of this will or to the settlement of my estate, submit to a third person whose decision shall be final. . . It is not seemly for Brother to go to law with Brother."

*Ed. Note: We are deeply grateful to James Colquhoun Galt, grandson of Thomas C., for his kind permission to print the material in this Bulletin. Though he has a Richmond residence, his real home is Old North River Field, part of the Rivanna portion of the original plantation. This home was erected by a Galt and beautifully restored and completed by his father.*

## NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Charlie Anderson, Hampton, Va.  
Mrs. Douglas Bethel, Richmond, Va.  
Mr. David C. Bearr, Owings Mills, Md.  
Mrs. Janie R. Bowles, Thomasville, N.C.  
Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Bradshaw, Kents Store, Va.  
Mrs. T. J. Bugg, Jr., Palmyra, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Easter, Bremo, Va.  
Mrs. Charles Ellett, Richmond, Va.  
Mrs. Douglas Folkes, Fork Union, Va.  
Mr. Joe France, Manassas, Va.  
Mr. James C. Galt, Richmond, Va.  
Mrs. Thomas H. Griffin, Wilmington, Va.  
Mrs. Brisco Guy, Richmond, Va.  
Dr. and Mrs. Malcolm Harris, West Point, Va.  
Mrs. W. N. Hannah, Jr., Richmond, Va.  
Mr. Fred D. Hardy, Columbia, Va.  
Mrs. Hughes Holland, Kents Store, Va.  
Mrs. Douglas Hughes, Richmond, Va.  
Capt. and Mrs. Robert E. Johnson, Fork Union, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Jones, Fork Union, Va.  
Capt. and Mrs. A. N. Lazizza, Fork Union, Va.  
Mrs. W. E. Lloyd, Pasadena, Calif.  
Mrs. Louis M. Lundquist, Bellevue, Wash.  
Mrs. Leland Mabry, Fork Union, Va.  
Mrs. Catherine Maldonado, New York, N.Y.  
Mrs. George Maverick, Charlottesville, Va.  
Mr. John M. Nalle, Charlottesville, Va.  
Mr. E. J. Oglesby, Charlottesville, Va.  
Miss Katherine Omohundro, Gordonsville, Va.  
Mrs. Bobbie S. Pastore, Columbia, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. Pembroke Pettit, Louisa, Va.  
Mrs. David Pitts, Baltimore, Md.  
Mr. Henry Pulliam, Fork Union, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. L. T. Richardson, Kents Store, Va.  
Mrs. J. P. Rockecharlie, Richmond, Va.  
Mrs. Marie Rosson, Palmyra, Va.  
Mrs. Andrew Sheridan, Kents Store, Va.  
Mrs. Lloyd T. Smith, Jr., Charlottesville, Va.  
Mrs. Ralph Stoughton, Palmyra, Va.  
Dr. Charles Turner, Lexington, Va.  
Lt. Col. and Mrs. Albert Williams, Fork Union, Va.  
Mr. Porter Wright, Louisa, Va.

**FLUVANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OFFICERS: 1971-1972**

*President:* Mrs. W. W. Bercaw

*First Vice-President:* Mrs. H. M. Bransford

*Second Vice-President:* Mr. Charles Manning

*Recording Secretary:* Mrs. John M. Hunt

*Corresponding Secretary:* Mrs. W. A. Talley

*Treasurer:* Mrs. Burwell W. Seay

*Members of the Executive Board at Large:* Mrs. Ellis P. Snead,  
Mr. William Siegfried, Mrs. Charles F. Coffey.

The Fluvanna Historical Society was founded in 1964 to collect and preserve manuscripts and other documents relating to the history of Fluvanna County in Virginia; to maintain the Old Stone Jail at the county seat, Palmyra, as a museum where antiquities of the county may be exhibited; and to encourage historical research.

Meetings of the Society are held three times a year. Annual dues are \$2.00; a life membership costs \$50.00. A bulletin is published twice a year, distributed to members free of charge. Copies can be purchased for \$2.00 single copy; \$3.00 double copy. Readers are requested to contribute any information of historical interest they may have or may be able to obtain. The society will endeavor to publish as much of this information as may be possible.

All communications should be addressed to: Mrs. Henry C. McGehee, Chairman of Publications, Fluvanna County Historical Society, Box 132, Palmyra, Virginia.



*The Bulletin of the*  
**FLUVANNA COUNTY**  
**Historical Society**

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Number 15

October 1972

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**COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA**

*Built in 1830*

9173

# **POST OFFICES OF FLUVANNA COUNTY**

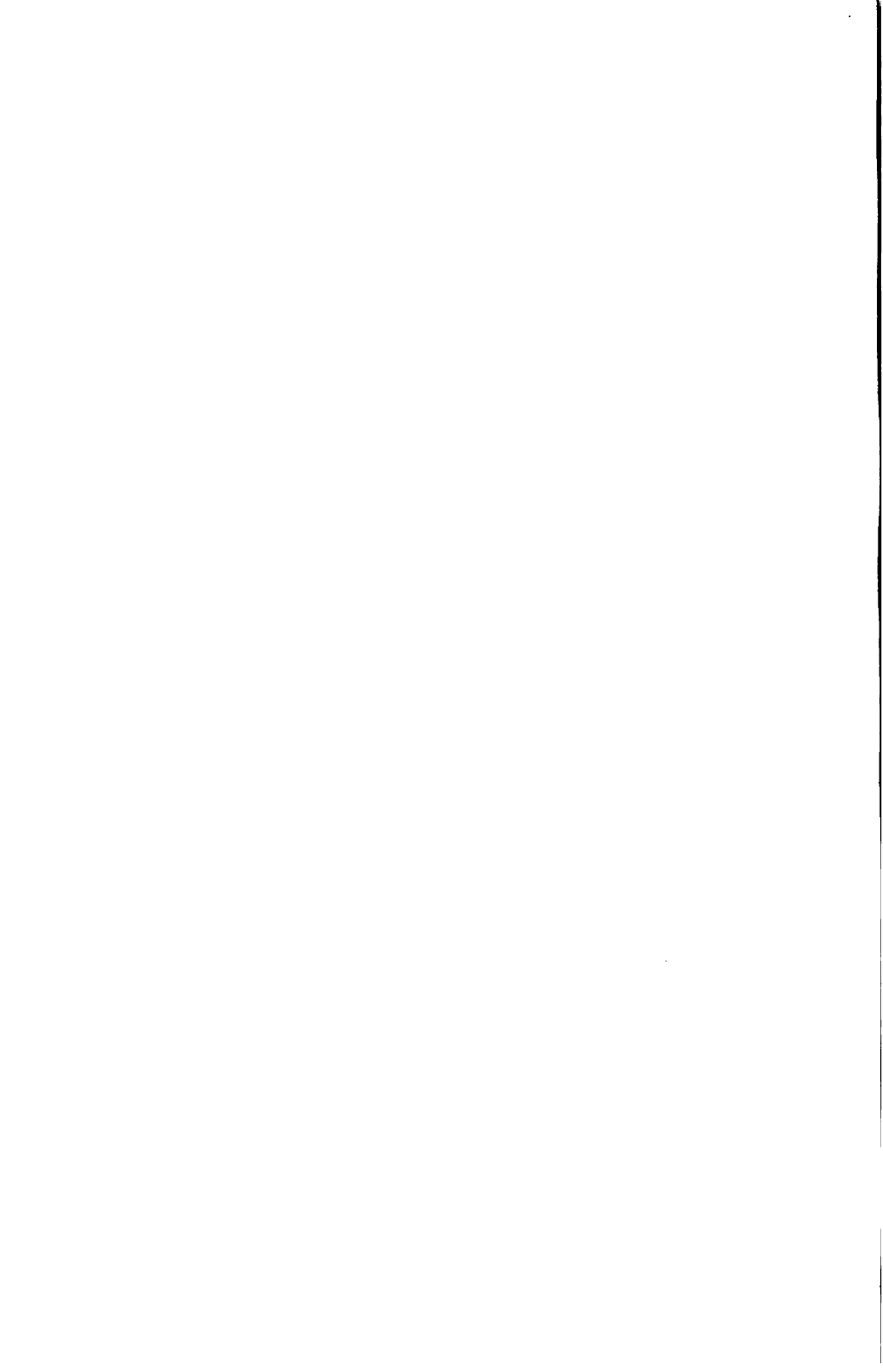
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## POST OFFICES OF FLUVANNA COUNTY

### Places and People

"Dear Mother, I guess you have been wondering what in the world has become of me that I did not write . . ."

Letters. What would our world be like without them? They are a basic of modern life – personal, social, and business; they are the lifeblood of government agencies.

A post office was originally a station at which horses and men were posted to relieve each other in the carrying of government dispatches. Such mail carriers later won lasting fame through the saga of the pony express, carrying many kinds of mail. Such pride they developed; their slogan became, "The mail must go through!" It was a pride that produced a longer quotation: "Not snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night, shall stay these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

The sentiment is stated differently in *Jeremiah*: "One post shall run to meet another and one messenger to meet another to shew the King . . ."

The first postal systems were intended primarily to transmit government reports, and private persons depended on special messengers or they entrusted their letters to travelers going the appropriate way.

Governments began handling private mail as a source of revenue, of course. In 1653 England inaugurated its first postal operation, and in 1680 a London merchant, William Dockwra, initiated the London Penny Post, which was maintained until 1801.

The British government opened the first post office in the U.S. in Boston in 1639. In 1657 Virginia established a postal service of mail from city to city, carried by men on horseback. They rode "post haste!"

By 1691 royal authority would be granted to a man to establish an American postal system for what he could make out of it.

Benjamin Franklin became postmaster of Philadelphia in 1737, and his wisdom and progressive methods so impressed the

British that they appointed him postmaster-general in 1752. He held the post until the Revolution.

One of the first steps of the second Continental Congress was the establishment of a colonial system of mails, and, later, the Constitution gave Congress wide powers in providing postal service. In 1784 a system of carrying letters by means of mail coaches was put into operation.

All ardent stamp collectors can tell you that in 1847 the U.S. adopted postal stamps similar to the British system, but the practice of collecting the cash and marking the letters with a pen continued for many years. As early as 1825 the government had authorized carriers to deliver letters to homes at a special charge of two cents each, to be collected from the person to whom the letter was addressed. In 1855 pre-payment of postage was made compulsory.

Fluvanna tradition has held that Wilmington, established on February 26, 1813, is the oldest post office in Fluvanna, but if one only "employs the little gray cells" when studying the mosaic of Fluvanna history, one realizes that Columbia must have had the first post office. Columbia, after all, was Fluvanna's first town, established November 25, 1788. James Quarles, first recorded postmaster of Columbia we have found so far, made a report to the Postmaster-General on April 25, 1793. So the post office was established before that date in 1793.

It is interesting to note that changing patterns of transportation on roads, canals and railroads created post offices; people locate their homes near transportation arteries. And changing patterns of transportation, especially improved roads and automobiles, closed many post offices.

Early records indicate several names under the heading "postmaster," and then list a figure that must designate the combined yearly salaries. In the early years the sum allotted Columbia was \$500; Lindsay's Cross Roads, \$300; Palmyra, \$800; Wilmington, \$400; and Winnsville, \$400.

Many anecdotes have been told in Fluvanna to reveal the political fortunes of the postmasters who were swept in or out of office by the tides of party power. Grover Cleveland and the Democrats came into office in 1885 and the most sweeping changes in postmasters came with the beginning of his two

administrations, 1885 and 1893 (with Republican Harrison in between). Also, Cleveland's administrations were most active in opening new post offices in Fluvanna. He was a champion of civil service reform.

It is hard to tell whether postmasters were changed because of death or retirement, or politics, and dates of new appointments do not always coincide with political changes. Some seem clear, as in Columbia: Joseph Payne became postmaster in July of 1889, replacing James A. Shepherd when Republican Harrison became president; but in 1893 James A. Shepherd got back the job when Cleveland again became president. Four years later Manley and Republican McKinley gained office.

Other examples could be cited, but for the most part the position of postmaster in Fluvanna seems to have been a matter of "family politics," for members of the same family have held post offices for years on end.

Cherished old letters prove that it was common practice for Fluvanna folk to communicate by sending letters by hand until well after the Civil War. But the Stage Coach Road had become a main thoroughfare by 1800, and the stagecoaches carried mail, leaving it at the tavern-stops along the way. The boats on the Rivanna and James could have carried mail to isolated homes.

With the coming of the packet boats, people along the James often received mail twice a day, from both the west-bound boats and those going east. But the coming of the canals and improved navigation did not bring new post offices. The mail was delivered to the private landings at the big James River plantations.

It was the railroads that brought new post offices, the Richmond and Allegheny on the James in 1881 and the Virginia Airline along the Rivanna and into the central section of the County in 1908. The "iron monster" belched smoke and clanged its bell, and there were new post offices called Vallena, Payne, Cohasset, Wildwood and Troy.

Rural free delivery was established in 1896, and Fluvanna had the first rural letter carrier in Virginia. A marker stands in the cemetery at Lyles Baptist Church, Wilmington, erected by the Virginia Rural Letter Carriers Association:

Erected in Honor of  
Frank W. Shepherd  
First Rural Letter Carrier  
in Virginia  
Who Served From  
October 22, 1896  
to  
September 30, 1921.

This first rural delivery service established in the State of Virginia originated at Palmyra. And one month after Shepherd loaded the mail into his buggy and called, "Giddap!" another route was established at Palmyra. James F. Howard was the carrier.

Cleveland Sadler remembers Frank W. Shepherd well, and tells us something about his route. All those gates! Shepherd had to stop his horse, climb down, open the gate, climb up, drive through, stop again, climb down, shut the gate, and crawl back into his buggy seat to slap the reins and proceed down the rutted roads.

He soon found a morning coffee break, provided by a young lady along the way, and those cups of coffee led straight to the altar. In Mrs. Lelia Harland's snapshot album is preserved a picture of Mr. Shepherd and his light buggy, showing his high-stepping horse prancing up the hill to Palmyra Post Office in 1908.

Mrs. Sallie Cleveland, in Bulletin Number 8, gives a wonderful description of the pride of a rural mail carrier. Mr. Howell Herndon purchased a special three-seated carryall with steps to let down for passengers to mount, and with front corners reserved for his mail bags. The fine horses he bred to pull this splended conveyance made good time, and when he overtook travelers, "he called out in a stentorian voice, 'Clear the track; let the United States mail pass!'"

Folk also remember how the mail was sent from Carysbrook to Columbia by a man riding a mule, and how Margaret Bragg walked from Nahor to Union Mills, carrying the mail pouch to meet the carrier going through on the Stage Coach Road.

Retired mail carriers today tell interesting stories about carrying crates of eggs (Handle With Care!), boxes of dressed

poultry and rabbits that must be kept cool, and cartons of baby chicks that must be kept warm. They often dispensed local news and free advice along the way, and rendered many small services such as setting a clock a patron left in the mailbox – literally “passing the time of day!”

It is interesting that women were accepted so early in the postal system. But we believe their activities began as a necessity, not as a strike for women’s liberation. They must have stepped in to fill in for men who went away to fight in the Civil War, and when the United States government straightened out their records after Appomattox, they gave these women official appointments.

Women served at Columbia, Fork Union, Palmyra, Wilmington, and Central Plains. However, Columbia did not have another postmistress for close to seventy years. Winnsville never had a postmistress during its existence, and Stage Junction has never had one. Today all but four of the post offices are in the capable hands of women.

Fluvanna memoirs tell of people going to Dixie to get the news from the front during the Civil War. What was there at Dixie then, besides the blacksmith shop and charcoal kilns, that men should be mustered in here? We found the answer on Gilmer’s War Map of 1863, and folk at Dixie say ’tis so: Dixie Post Office. There is no record of it in Washington – Fluvanna’s Confederate Post Office! At Dixie!

– MLM<sup>c</sup>G

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mr. Bernard Harris, Jr., whose hobby is philately, wrote to the National Archives and secured the names of Fluvanna post offices and the postmasters for the years 1830 to 1930. We are grateful to him for sharing his research.

Mr. Harris’ material listed the postmasters and the dates of appointments. We are printing these names and dates as given. Before each listing of postmasters, we have tried to include sketches of the communities, especially those where the post offices or commercial centers, once so important in the daily

lives of many people, have passed from existence. We are grateful to each postmaster, postmistress and individual who has patiently answered questions or kindly volunteered information.

The tales about the larger villages will have to wait until a more complete history can be written. We hope such histories will be written, and that we can publish them.

After studying Mr. Harris' papers covering 1830-1930, we realized it would be a pity not to make an effort to secure information on Fluvanna post offices before 1830. We wish to acknowledge the generosity of Mr. Virginius C. Hall, Jr., Assistant Director of the Virginia Historical Society, who shared with us his list of post offices, compiled from postal guides and the *Register of All Officers and Agents*.

A good friend of the Fluvanna Society took time to send us a list of names and dates for early post offices, copied from *The Virginia Genealogist* of April-June, 1966. Her help was a tremendous boon in research and morale.

Upon request we have tried to add the names of more recent post office personnel. Perhaps these names will breathe life into our record, and distract from the inexorable passage of Time, the inevitable transformation of Progress.

## EARLY POST OFFICES

The research on dates and postmasters of early Fluvanna post offices is incomplete and contradictory. For this reason we are not publishing this material in the main body of our Bulletin. Perhaps by publishing data secured thus far we will reach some reader who can furnish the missing segments of this mosaic of Fluvanna communities. If we secure additional information on this era, we will publish it in the next Bulletin.

### *Columbia*

All sources searched agree that Columbia Post Office was established by 1793; the first postmaster, James Quarles. Other names follow, with approximate dates of appointment:

1813	Meriwether Morris	1825	Horatio Magruder
1821	Stephen Breedlong	1827	Jesse A. Strange
1823	Stephen Long [?]	1829	James W. Jennings

***Fluvanna Court House – Timberlake's Store – Rising Sun***

The post office at Fluvanna Court House was opened about 1822. Why was there no post office at the county seat before this date? After all, the court house was built on the east side of the Rivanna River, near the center of the county (and across the river from its present site), soon after the county was formed in 1777.

We believe the county seat was served by Timberlake's Store Post Office, which opened about 1804. This post office was first located at Rising Sun, north of Wilmington on the Stage Coach Road, now Route 608. John Timberlake, clerk of the county courts lived here, and it was the custom then for the clerk to maintain his office at his home.

The Timberlake family ran the Rising Sun Tavern. There are other taverns in Virginia named "Rising Sun," and presumably they were so named because the stage coach departed at sunrise.

In a letter, John Timberlake, Jr. stated that he began serving as his father's deputy about 1802. After three years he quit to run a store at Rising Sun. After a year his father offered him greater financial gain if he would again take the position of deputy clerk. So he built a clerk's office at Rising Sun and moved his father's books and papers into it.

In 1809 John Timberlake, Jr. became Clerk of the Superior Court. Since this office had to be maintained at the Court House, he moved the books of the County Court there, too.

It was about this time that the post office became known as Rising Sun Post Office. Soon after this, another son, Walker Timberlake, acquired the land on the Rivanna River where he located his Palmyra Mills in 1813. Since references to Timberlake's Store Post Office in 1813 and 1821 list Walker Timberlake as postmaster, we wonder if he did not open a post office in his new store near his mill, giving it the old name.

Records agree that Rising Sun Post Office closed in 1813. Timberlake's Store Post Office closed (for the second time?) in 1821. The next year the Fluvanna Court House Post Office opened. In 1827 the controversy to move the Court buildings across the Rivanna had begun, and Fluvanna Court House Post Office closed, and Palmyra Post Office opened.



### *Laurel Spring Post Office*

We first found a reference to this post office in Joseph Martin's *Gazetteer* of 1835, which states that Laurel Spring was 61 miles N.W. by W. of Richmond in Fluvanna County.

We have since found two references, one of which lists Laurel Spring Post Office in Fluvanna, 1825-1828; and the other states the post office was in Albemarle, 1829-1837. Did the post office move over the county line in 1828? Was Joseph Martin wrong? And where was Laurel Spring?

We found only two postmasters: Joseph Farrar, 1829, and Owen C. Bransford, 1833.

### *Snead's Tavern Post Office*

The John Wood Map of 1820 placed Snead's Tavern where three roads met: a road from Columbia, a road from the Court House, and a road from old Fork Church. Judging from the distance between the Tavern and Little Cary Creek, the Tavern Post Office was near Dixie.

This post office opened about 1813, closed for two years in 1817, and opened for three more years. The last reference we have found was 1822. We hope to find more data on this.

### *Union Mills and Wilmington*

Believing that Wilmington was the second post office opened in Fluvanna, we were agreeably surprised to find so many other early post offices. Union Mills and Wilmington both opened in 1813 (as did Snead's). Did the government feel a greater need for communication during the War of 1812?

These two post offices are well-documented after 1819; they will be completely covered in the next Bulletin.

### *Winn's Store – Winn's Tavern – Winnsville*

The post offices bearing the name of the Winn family served the area we know as Fork Union-Cohasset for twenty years, 1825-1845. Glimpses of this community which we have gained thus far are most fascinating. We hope someone will come forward with more information which we can use when we cover all the post offices in the Fork Union area.

## ANTIOCH

Antioch is on the old Secretary Road; the Antioch Post Office took its name from the local church, and the church, in turn, took its name from the Bible . . .

Demands of commerce created roads through the wilderness, roads which made small towns. A pioneer would build a home on a new road, and soon he would find it profitable to open his home to travelers as a tavern; then he would open a store to supply other needs of the travelers and to serve his neighbors — thus a settlement was born.

Secretary Carter built the "Secretary's Rolling Road" on which to transport his tobacco from the upper Hardware River to the James at Bremono. Settlers followed his road into the backwoods, and the road became deeper and wider, others branching from it.

Such a branch was cut through the forests to Scottsville, and in the fork the Kent Family opened a store. Sometime before 1858 they and their Baptist friends built a church, which they called Antioch. The deed for the land for the church stipulated that there should be a schoolhouse "on the southeast corner of said land." A community had put down roots.

J. F. Kent was operating a store in 1872 when Henry M. Brice, a real estate agent, became the first postmaster for Antioch. By 1877 Sadler and Thomas also ran a store nearby, so we do not know which store housed the early post office.

Directories tell us that Kent still had a store in 1890, as did V. W. Phillips. Mr. and Mrs. T. C. Johnson, who run a store near Antioch today, tell about the Phillips Store they remembered. The store was owned by John H. Phillips, Antioch's last postmaster, and it stood in the forks of the old Secretary Road and the Scottsville Road. Mr. Phillips also had a blacksmith shop, and he set up a steam engine "down on the branch;" Mr. T. B. Johnson ran the mill to grind corn or saw wood. Later Mr. Phillips opened a tomato cannery there.

Today Routes 643 and 637 branch from Route 620 at Antioch, bisecting the gently rolling highland. On Route 643, in the midst of fertile fields, the Transcontinental Gas Pipeline Corporation erected a large pumping station, painted it battleship gray, manicured an extensive lawn around it, and built

houses for the personnel.

In the other direction, the child-forgotten school building endures the passing years, and across the road stands the enlarged church. Route 637, passing the church and the well-kept cemetery, cuts through pines and opens a vista to the blue of distant peaks against the sky.

#### *Postmasters*

Henry M. Price	15 Feb. 1872	John P. Sadler	17 June 1881
Samuel H. Kent	4 Feb. 1873	John R. Omohundro	17 Nov. 1881
John P. Sadler	20 Mar. 1874	Ludlow M. Bramham	14 June 1885
Robert R. Sadler	16 May 1876	Robert A. Blackburn	22 Apr. 1897
John R. Omohundro	14 May 1879	John H. Phillips	10 Sept. 1901

Discontinued Nov. 18, 1922, effective Dec. 5, 1922; moved to Scottsville.

### **BREMO AREA**

William Galt still owned Glen Arvon when, in 1854, a post office opened down on the James River and Kanawha Canal, probably near his boat landing. The post office was named for Galt's plantation, Glen Arvon, but it closed after two years and opened near Bremono. This post office took its name from the Bremono plantations and the rock cliffs beside the James — Bremono Bluffs.

After the end of the Civil War, Walter S. Boswell opened a post office, perhaps near the old one at Glen Arvon, giving it his name. Records tell that by 1877 Boswell was running a store on the Canal. There had long been a ferry here to take people and produce across the James River to Cumberland County. Boswell Post Office discontinued in 1876. There is a brick building near the railroad today that has been used for a barn for many, many years, but some folk tell that it was once a barroom. Could it have been used for Boswell's store, or for a warehouse? The later store on the railroad was a frame building, we are told.

The year 1893 brought another post office to serve the area, one called Pinta. The reason for the name eludes us — it is a Spanish name, the name of one of the ships of Columbus. By the names of the postmistresses and the land which they owned,

and by local memory, this post office was on the highland, once part of Glen Arvon, where Mr. Lawrence Brookman now lives. A Negro woman walked to Columbia each day to get the mail, it is said, although it appears that Bremono Bluff was closer. After four years, Pinta closed to Columbia.

In 1898 the river post office again opened, this time called Stearns, for the owner of Glen Arvon. In 1890 Mr. Franklin Stearns had deeded the railroad a strip of land on which they built a railroad station called Boswell. The station continued to be called Boswell even after the opening of Stearns Post Office. The railroad station finally became Stearns, too, about 1910. The post office closed to Bremono Bluff in 1929.

It is interesting to note that there was another railroad stop between Stearns and Columbia, called Rivanna. An official of the railroad lived at the Point of Fork Mansion, so the trains stopped there, replacing the packet boats which had always brought the mail and passengers to the landing. He did not call the railway stop Point of Fork, but Rivanna, because of proximity to the mouth of that river. When the executive left Point of Fork, the C & O thought a stop was unnecessary, so close to Columbia, so Rivanna moved up the James River to the farm of the J. H. Payne family, the place still called Rivanna Farm.

The Buckingham Slate Quarries, the Virginia Electric and Power Company plant, and the Solite Corporation have combined with other factors to keep Bremono Bluff a thriving community that even repeated floods have failed to obliterate. It is one of those interesting little river towns whose history, waiting to be told, still lives among the quaint old buildings.

### *Postmasters*

#### **GLEN ARVON**

Joseph C. Clements    6 June 1854    Cornelius P. Snead    19 Feb. 1855

Changed to Bremono Bluffs 6 Sept. 1856

#### **BOSWELLS**

Walter S. Boswell    10 Dec. 1866    Augustus M. Jones    22 Jan. 1876

Mrs. Catherine Ray    19 Jan. 1876

Discontinued 7 Aug. 1876

## **PINTA**

Ellen S. Welch	12 Apr. 1893	Susan W. Stone	9 Nov. 1895
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Closed to Columbia 24 Nov. 1897

## **STEARNS**

David H. Loving	10 Feb. 1898	David H. Loving	20 Apr. 1914
Irene H. Loving	11 Dec. 1906		

Discontinued, effective 31 Oct. 1929; moved to Breomo Bluff

## **BREMO BLUFF**

Cornelius P. Snead	6 Sept. 1856	William H. White	21 Sept. 1889
Robert W. Currin	25 Aug. 1865	Moyle Davis	13 Nov. 1891
John C. Pettis	29 Jan. 1867	Melbourne H. Kimbrough	
David R. Norvell	19 Feb. 1868		5 June 1893
John M. Norvell	2 Dec. 1873	George W. Smith	5 June 1897
Wm. O. Sydnor	13 Jan. 1882	Samuel T. Ranson	2 May 1905
Mrs. Norella E. Currin		William H. Ranson	4 Apr. 1914
	23 June 1882	Samuel T. Ranson	13 Jan. 1926

Mrs. Norella E. Kimbrough

16 May 1883

Mr. William Howard Ranson was re-appointed around 1933 and served for about ten years and then his brother Samuel T. Ranson was appointed again and served until he retired in 1951. Mr. F. F. White then received the appointment.

## **BYBEE**

A "Mr. Bibee" came to the high plateau at the headwaters of "The Great Byrd Creek" long before Fluvanna was put on the map. He gave his name to a race path and to a road cut through the wilderness, and by 1794 his name identified a group of Baptists who formed Bybee's Road Baptist Church.

Digging into "long forgotten lore" we find that old Parson Howard took stock of the topography and changed the name of the central community to Center Hill.

When Robert Samuel White opened the post office, he wanted to name it Center Hill, but there were others with like or similar names in the state, so he named the post office Bybee, the same as the road and the Church. However, the school was always called Center Hill, so the community has retained its special dual identity.

There have been at least three school buildings and three stores at Center Hill, and except for the closing of the school (the last building is now a community center), Bybee has remained about the same — a store, a post office, some attractive dwellings. Mr. John Hughes had the first store there; Mr. Ford was the second merchant; then Mr. Sam White built a store for trade and to house the post office.

Twice a week Mr. White sent John Howard to Lindsay in Louisa County on the C & O Railroad, to fetch the mail in his saddle bags. Since Bybee is not on a railroad, the post office has continued to be served by a star route.

The early Bybee community depended on Holland's Mill down on a branch of the Byrd. One prosperous owner, Shandy Holland, built a sturdy home across from the Center Hill store. The massive timbers used to frame the house were meant to last, and there it is today, shaded by friendly old trees, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Elias Loving.

Late in the 19th century, there were two mills nearby, R. S. White and Co. and White and Wright. J. D. Gillispie built coaches and wagons, and H. C. Robers was a distiller — quite legal, you know, but no doubt an embarrassment to the Bybee's Road Baptists!

Before the Civil War the school was located nearer the Church than the later buildings, and the students paid a tuition of 50 cents a month. When the War came, Mrs. Effie Wilson said, the teacher left for the North to join the Yankees, and many of the students of Center Hill School were soon wearing the gray.

When Mr. Edgar Loving was 82 years old, he told about a spring day when he was attending the old school. The pupils heard a great noise up the road. Yankee Cavalry! The teacher, Mrs. Shandy Holland, very wisely gave up all efforts at instruction and dismissed school so the pupils could watch. It took about two hours for the troops to pass. Very orderly, Mr. Loving said, not destructive in his neighborhood, but when they reached Palmyra "they burned the mill and the covered bridge."

### *Postmasters*

Robert S. White	9 July 1885	Annie C. Loving	21 Apr. 1897
Sarah T. White	6 June 1892	Bessie S. White	24 Apr. 1909
		Bessie W. Ryalls	18 Aug. 1917

Mrs. Ila F. Wilson was appointed in 1943.

## **CARYSBROOK AREA**

7 The history of Carysbrook dates back to a land grant of 1927 for 1600 acres in the name of Miles Cary. He could not name the river that made his land so desirable; someone had beat him to it and given it to Queen Anne. So he gave his name to the Creek and to his plantation. In 1777 it was the back-country home of Wilson Miles Cary, Fluvanna's first gentleman justice.

We begin our tale about 100 years later when there was a school at Carysbrook, named for that part of the original plantation on which it stood: White Rock School. The master of White Rock Farm, Dr. George H. Snead was the guiding genius in the school — as he was in so much of the community life. His son was the first postmaster, so perhaps the post office, named Cary Creek Post Office, was also at White Rock, in 1884.

Could this post office have been down at the corner of Dr. Snead's place at East Point, where Cary Creek joined the Rivanna? There was a store there at the time; a lusty place where the folk from surrounding communities and the river boatmen gathered for a good time.

The records show that Cary Creek Post Office was discontinued, but Charles E. Jones had moved to the old Carysbrook Plantation, and the office stayed closed less than a month; then Carys Brook Post Office opened with Jones the postmaster. Mr. Jones and Democrat Grover Cleveland came into office in the first week of March, 1885.

Mr. Jones ran the post office in conjunction with his store, blacksmith shop, and mill near his home. When the Virginia Airline Railway was built in 1907-08 to replace the lower section of the Rivanna Navigation system, Mr. Jones built a substantial store of cement block across the tracks from the railway station and moved the post office there. He placed two

large cement posts where the public road entered his property to cross over the new railroad, and on these posts he placed plaques reading "Virginia Airline Railway – 1907."

He added a warehouse, storekeeper's house, tomato canner, and the houses on "Pine Street" where lived the families who rented and tilled the fertile lowgrounds. Out on the main road overlooking the store, he built a schoolhouse of cement brick for the County. (The cement blocks and cement brick were made on his farm, a new variation in building materials for the area.) For many years all grades were taught at the Carysbrook School, preparing students for college; in later years the three rooms (and two cloakrooms) housed elementary grades.

Can't you see it all now? You are trudging along past the big gateposts, and drowsy summer heat sends the perspiration trickling between your shoulder blades; the harsh gravel of the road bruises your bare feet, so you seek the grassy shoulder, pausing to listen to a telephone pole singing a one-note song. In your hot hand you clutch a basket of eggs. Careful, or you'll break some and not come out even to trade for coffee, baking powder, and salt. (Just as going home you must be careful not to lose any of the mail – count the number of pieces handed you and count them again when you get home!)

Oh, there goes the noon whistle at the stavemill down on the railroad tracks. Did you stop too long in the shade by the creek? Before the watchful windows of the summer-stilled school house, you take a well-beaten path across Mr. Jones' clover field and reach the shade of the squat gray station. No one is in the bay window bulging in front, no cream cans wait beside the tracks, and with disappointment you realize it isn't train time – no long lonesome whistle announces the approach of the chuffing roar and clanging bell, that monstrous hugeness and deafening motion which take your breath away before you have finished waving at the engineer (who always waves, too).

The twin steel ribbons, shimmering in the sun, stretch away until they come together in the distance. You put your ear close – mind the black grease – but there is no vibration, no sound from a distant serpentine colossus. But your heart skips a beat because there on the siding are the "shanty cars;" the railroad men are here while they make repairs on the line. The coming



of the shanty cars is almost as exciting as the coming of the gypsies, and there, isn't that cook gypsy-looking, sunning himself on the steps of the kitchen car?

With a last peek over your shoulder, you hurry on past the odor of fertilizer and the brown smell of cowfeed from the open door of the warehouse, skirt the tie lot and pulpwood yard where rows of waiting ricks stretch along the siding. What a place to play hide-and-seek! A hollow clunk-a-chunk reaches your ear as sweating men strain to lift the resinous pulpwood and load it stick by stick into the stifling box cars. From the cannery higher on the hill rises steam and wide laughter, but all sounds and sights are shut away as you enter that double front door of the store and step into the mysterious cool dimness within.

A country store — but an imposing country store — its reassuring solid concrete bulk denoting the wealth of variety within, and holding two graceful weeping willows like a cooling green veil before its face.

The weeping willows with troublesome roots were the first to disappear from the Arcadian scene. A tall gas tank reigned in their place, symbol of the great god, Progress. Then the C. E. Jones family, carrying out their father's wishes, gave the wide level field that stretched from the store along the main road to the County for its first central high school. The little Carysbrook School stood neglected and empty, and Pine Street and the cannery faded away. Soon a new store on the big road (Route 15) replaced the handsome two-story relic by the railroad tracks — taking the post office with it, of course.

Beside the new store, in 1934, Mr. H. C. Jones built "The Pop Shop." Oh, does anyone remember The Pop Shop, that mecca for the pre-World War II swingers in white duck trousers and white shirts and blue jackets; in thin dotted swiss dresses that reached half-way to the ankles, and with long curls above the puffed sleeves? Can't you see them, the first teens on "wheels," driving up with a loud tooting of horns from convertibles with rumble seats, to drink Coca-Colas and talk, talk, talk?

The old Carysbrook School was taken down and the cement brick used for a building at the new Abrams High School; new buildings were added to the Fluvanna County High

School. Another store replaced "store No. 2," and since building materials were scarce during World War II, old Rivanna Church near Wilmington was taken down and parts of it started a new life as a country store.

The flying years brought a factory building for making furniture, then shoes; and last year it was joined by a large textile plant constructed to the rear of the school, the older buiding becoming a factory outlet store.

The pulpwood yard remained a constant through the years, enjoyed a short boom, and then died. The mail had been taken off the trains and put on a truck years ago, and the little railroad station (Surely it used to be bigger than that?) was suddenly gone. The warehouse followed, and then, oh blow to nostalgia, the new plant took down the old store building! They planted an avenue of brave young white pines along the drive leading to the colorful but impersonal building — a flat-topped beehive beside old Pine Street.

### *Postmasters*

#### **CARY CREEK**

Channing Snead      21 Oct. 1884

Discontinued; moved to Palmyra 10 Feb. 1885

#### **CARYSBROOK**

Charles E. Jones	3 Mar. 1885	Jane M. Harvey	11 Mar. 1901
Andrew J. Joyner	19 Nov. 1895	Charles E. Jones	3 Nov. 1903
Eugene P. Houchins	12 Nov. 1897	John R. Cabell	6 Apr. 1910
Charlie W. Lanford	19 Nov. 1898	Andrew R. McChessney	
William A. Sadler	7 Oct. 1899		21 Mar. 1914
		Wilfred C. Baker	11 Apr. 1919

Katherine L. Baker followed her father as postmistress, and Edward R. Evans was appointed in 1958.

### **CENTRAL PLAINS**

We surmise that the traffic on the River Road, stage-coaches and wagons, led to the development of Central Plains. Here, or near here, the old Brema (or Secretary's Rolling Road) must have crossed the River Road (also called Charlottesville Stage Road). The post office here was one of the earlier ones in

the county with records dating back to January, 1842. It must have served a very large area, for it was the only post office for the highlands of the western section of the county until Antioch opened in 1872.

The first church in the area was old Fork Church, dating back to the formation of the County; and then, in mid-nineteenth century, the Baptist built Fluvanna Church to the west. The Church of the Brethren erected a building about a half-mile to the east which still stands.

A new brick school for Cunningham District was built at Central Plains, and it and Fluvanna Church remain the centers of the community.

Very little of the old commercial center remains, but Kidd's Store became a trading center almost in sight of the stores at Central Plains. Old Kidd's Store stood near Lambert's Tavern, which has been moved, but the store of today is still in the forks of the two roads and is again owned by a Mr. Kidd.

Before 1856 Samuel Henry Sadler ran a store in a brick building at Central Plains which also housed the post office. (There is only one brick building standing today – could it be the same building that once housed Mr. Sadler's dry-goods store? Though small, it is an interesting building with boxed eaves and bricks laid in Flemish bond.)

Sallie Sadler Cleveland told of attending a one-room school nearby on the farm of Willis Thomas. After her marriage in 1883 she taught a one-room school which stood in Mr. Burgess' yard at the sharp turn in the road.

By 1870 the area was supporting four general merchants: Burgess and Co., J. T. Kidd, J. R. Noel and A. J. Taylor. Two doctors practiced there, Dr. John H. Bledsoe and Dr. William Lambert; J. R. Noel was the magistrate; and a directory listed J. W. Bagby as a builder and stated that H. M. Price had a vineyard.

In 1890 J. T. Kidd, W. J. Snoddy and Burgess ran the stores, E. S. Glass made wagons and coaches, D. W. Anderson and H. W. Morris ran saw mills, M. A. Burgess had a millinery shop, and Jesse Creecy was a distiller. Two physicians, Dr. John Cleveland and Dr. William Lambert, Sr., and two land agents, D. M. Burgess and H. M. Price, received their mail at Central Plains.

County folks living today can remember Mr. Burgess'

thriving general store and the millinery shop Mrs. Octavia Burgess Blackburn kept in the big front room of her home. Mrs. Blackburn went to Baltimore each spring and fall to buy the latest fashions in hats, which she trimmed herself.

A diary of 1881-87 tells how farmers who lived as far away as Fork Union sold their tobacco to Alfred S. Burgess at Central Plains, bought their plow points and other equipment there, and took their horses to his blacksmith shop to be shod.

The commercial buildings and old homes disappeared with the years. It was the lovely gardens that refused to disappear and the old trees, flowering shrubs and precipitate spring bulbs live on.

### *Postmasters*

Charles Williams 15 Jan. 1842

Discontinued 9 July 1843 [Re-opened]

Jefferson R. Noel 8 Feb. 1849 Joella Haden 13 May 1897

Nellie S. Noel 9 Feb. 1866 Allen E. Haden 16 Sept. 1899

Harrison Haislip 26 Mar. 1867 Olivia A. Paulett 18 July 1901

(Discontinued 28 Apr. 1875; re-opened)

Charles S. Irving 18 May 1875 Percy W. Haden 15 Sept. 1905

Olivia A. Haden 26 July 1889 Octavia C. Blackburn

Alfred S. Burgess 9 May 1893 11 Dec. 1906

Mail changed to Shores 8 Feb. 1907; effective 28 Feb. 1907.

## COLUMBIA

Columbia was Fluvanna's first post office and its first incorporated town. It was created in 1788 by an act of the General Assembly on the land of David Ross. It appears that our first town had a mayor before the United States inaugurated a president; Mr. J. W. Stump says Washington was late for his ceremonies, so the Columbia mayor was sworn in first. Although we do not say that "George Washington slept here," it has been said that he once stopped in Columbia. People used to say also that were Washington to come back he would find the place little changed, but that was before the tavern and so many old homes were taken down. The Old Stone House (Masonic Lodge) is the oldest building left.

The Indians chose to camp in the fork of the Rivanna and James Rivers, a site more easily defended, a site Ross chose for the Point of Fork Arsenal which supplied arms to the Continental forces during the Revolution. However, Columbia was laid out on the hillside north of the James at the mouth of the Rivanna. Its streets were named for saints, but there have been times when boisterous St. James Street has shocked the County. And there have been times when the town has petulantly declared that the County treated it like a red-headed stepchild, 'way over there in the corner, spilling into Goochland County.

Columbia is an important post office with rural and star routes. It serves patrons in Fluvanna, Goochland and Cumberland.

The James and Rivanna Rivers made the town, shaped its two hundred-year history, and as this bulletin was being prepared, the usually beautiful and placid rivers poured from their banks once more, writing a new chapter of financial agony and physical destruction in the story of Columbia, a chapter entitled "Hurricane Agnes."

### *Postmasters*

G. M. Mills			
G. A. Payne	} 20 Feb. 1830	Beverly Grant	6 Mar. 1871
Joseph Hodgson		Alexander G. Peers	26 Sept. 1884
L. D. Spears	} 1 May 1837	Beverly Grant	8 Oct. 1884
William Pannill		James A. Shepherd	4 Dec. 1886
William Fontaine	} 17 Nov. 1841	Joseph Payne	26 July 1889
Richard J. Moseley		James A. Shepherd	28 July 1893
Alex McRae	} 9 July 1851	James H. Manley	27 July 1897
William B. Bowles		Dabney Cosby	5 May 1914
Isaac N. Turner	24 Oct. 1860	Louis H. Stoneman	5 Feb. 1923
Mrs. Rebecca W. Turner	9 Aug. 1865		
Samuel S. Pettit	18 Dec. 1867		

Philip Cowherd became postmaster about the time Roosevelt won the presidency, in 1933 or '34; Mrs. Elizabeth B. Mosby was appointed August 27, 1935; and the present postmistress, Mrs. Lillian J. Tryall was appointed in January, 1969.

## CROFTON

The Rivanna River slips between Monticello Mountain and the hills, stretches itself between wider banks, and enters Fluvanna County. The first bridge to span the stream in Fluvanna carries Route 600. Near this bridge stood Crofton Post Office.

Crofton opened in 1897 and like most post offices of the time, was located in a store. Mr. William Jones was the last postmaster, and it closed when he died about 1936.

The name? A mystery. "Croft" is a good old Scots word for a small homestead . . . Why wasn't the post office named Bernardsburg, the old name for the community? Just 101 years earlier the General Assembly had created Fluvanna's second town right across the Rivanna, on the west side. The town, founded in 1796, only twenty years after the Declaration of Independence, was named Bernardsburg to honor a local family named Bernard. John Bernard secured land here as early as 1739. Fluvanna folk soon smoothed and shortened the name to "Barnesburg," and in the county clerk's office you find it so recorded.

The town lived and vanished so long ago that its history has a fairy tale quality, that of a veritable "Brigadoon." The burgomaster's big house on the hill, a stone fort on the point of land overlooking the town, a gallows tree, and bugles blowing to call the militia to drill on the flats below — all are evoked by inherited tales of a past long sleeping.

However, in its day, Bernardsburg was a busy little commercial center. One of the earliest warehouses for the state inspection of tobacco was established here before 1800. It is said Barnesburg had a printing press and newspaper when Charlottesville was in its infancy.

The trustees for the town were Joseph Haden, John Wills, James Payne, Henry Martin, Robert Quarles, Joseph Bernard, and Peter H. Ware. In 1800 they sold half-acre lots for 40 pounds sterling.

Adrian's Creek (or Boston Creek) entered the Rivanna here, winding beneath helmock-clad cliffs. (Lake Monticello dam outlet changed its course.) Here on the creek Allen Bernard had a tanyard, and in 1803 he built a milldam and grist mill. Later

the Boston family ran the mill. In 1805 William Jones built a saw mill to furnish lumber for the new town.

On the hill between the site of the grist mill and the canal locks are the remains of the miller's house, storekeeper's house, store, and other buildings. The highway wound down the hill past the store, crossed the canal above the upper lock, and followed the towpath until it turned down to cross the river on a unique water-level bridge. Some of the earliest buildings were doubtless of logs, and there is a story of houses within the hillsides, half-log, half-cave. Perhaps the cave-like houses sheltered the workmen who built the beautiful stone locks, boat basin, and canal around the middle of the last century.

The pre-Revolutionary War fort was later used as a jail, and finally the stones from the building were used for highway construction. According to tradition, LaFayette and his men camped here on their march from Mechunk to Yorktown. The hangman's tree, a big oak, was still standing in 1935. One wonders — is it still there?

The Bernards were true pioneers, and a few years after the town was founded, they pushed on farther west. The next family to leave its mark on the town were the Bostons, who lived in the old house and called it Red Hills for the color of the soil on the rolling hills.

Red Hills was virtually in ruins when it was razed to make way for the Lake Monticello development. The timbers used in the house, the construction, the panelled wainscoting, old hinges and wooden locks, the flooring, and the huge rock chimneys all testified to the age of the once handsome house. The long slant of the roofline in the back and the heavy wooden lintels of the fireplaces were of special interest.

Reuben H. Boston purchased the place in 1826, and it was known as a hospitable, happy home. One descendant told of parties, dances, and charades and said several brides cut their initials on the window panes with their diamond engagement rings.

At the approach of the Civil War, the old parade ground must have known once more the tramp of marching feet, for a son, Reuben B. Boston, organized a company of men which was assigned to the 5th Virginia Cavalry, Army of Northern Virginia. He is buried in the family cemetery on a slope near the

house site; his portrait hangs in Battle Abbey. The family believes he was the last Confederate officer killed before the surrender: "Col. R. B. Boston, born April 21, 1831; killed in battle, April 7, 1865" – just two days before Appomattox.

### *Postmasters*

George W. Houchins 12 June 1897

Roswell E. Haden 2 Oct. 1901

William M. Jones 28 Aug. 1913

Post office closed about 1936; area is now served by a rural route from Palmyra.

## CUNNINGHAM AREA

The community of Cunningham took its name from the Creek which pioneers named long before Jefferson and Fry made their great map in 1751. Doubtless the Creek was named for a person, though the literal meaning of Cunningham is "King's Home!" Such a grand name!

Who will put pen to paper and write about this fast-growing area of Fluvanna that became a settlement because of a church – a church which is still the hub of the neighborhood?

The first post office for the area was called Haden. Could the site of this post office have been on the Haden-Martin Road at Martin's Exchange? Evidently not. Elbridge G. Haden was the postmaster, and in 1880 he bought Poplar Springs from Col. W. D. Haden; in 1883 he bought adjoining Pleasant Grove from the same man. Pleasant Grove is the brick home on Route 53 now owned by C. R. Lippard and called Laura Ann Farm. So Haden Post Office was probably very close to Cunningham.

Haden closed after less than six months, 4 January 1883, and late the next year a post office opened at the place we know as Nahor, called Bragg Post Office. Like many places, this was named for a man, probably for William J. Bragg who had a mill and a store there as early as 1877 and was appointed postmaster in 1884.

His mill on Adrian's Creek was named Enterprise Mill, and he lived in the charming house above the creek, now called Quaint Lea, the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Webber. In 1882



the store in the forks of the road was under the name of William J. Bragg & Son, and W. J. Bragg, Jr. was building a house behind the store.

Bragg Post Office was discontinued in 1886, and in 1894 Marcell G. Sclater opened a post office caller Nahor, named, we suppose, from the Bible; Nahor was, of course, the grandfather of Abraham.

Cunningham Post Office opened the same day, but for some reason closed just short of a year. Today all this area is served by a route from Palmyra.

We have told how Margaret Bragg walked to Union Mills to get the mail for Nahor. There must have been others. Beginning about 1929, Mr. Massie Haden went to Union Mills each day to get the mail, often crossing the Rivanna in a boat when the bridge was out. The Nahor Post Office closed when Mr. M. G. Sclater died, around 1935. When it closed, Mr. Haden continued to get the mail from Union Mills, until 1945, but he placed the mail in mailboxes as he returned — a star route that delivered individual mail. (This is the procedure today for some Stage Junction addresses: They are served by Mr. Ernest Morris on the star route from Columbia to Kents Store.)

The name of the local church is enlightening and endearing: Effort Baptist Church. It stands on the old Martin King Road, circled by the white and gray tombstones which have congregated in its protective shadow.

The barroom stood across the road from Mr. Bragg's store, but changes in local thirst, or national liquor laws, closed it. When a windstorm blew the roof off nearby Piney Grove School, they just moved the school into the Bragg saloon! Now the last school building at Nahor has been converted into a dwelling.

Nahor continued to support a store, the last one in a cinderblock building, run by Mr. Parker Goodman. It recently closed, but the old store across the road has taken a new lease on life. Painted a barn red, it houses antiques for sale.

### *Postmasters*

HADEN

Elbridge G. Haden      1 Aug. 1882

Discontinued (mail to Palmyra) 4 Jan. 1883

**BRAGG**

**William J. Bragg**      21 Oct. 1884      **John F. Black**      9 July 1885  
Discontinued 11 May 1886

**CUNNINGHAM**

**Sallie M. Taylor**      9 Apr. 1894  
Not in operation 21 Mar. 1895

**NAHOR**

**Marcellus G. Sclater**      9 Apr. 1894

Mr. Sclater served about 41 years; the post office closed when he died in 1935. The area is now served by a rural route from Palmyra.

[Other post offices of Fluvanna will be covered in Bulletin Number 16.]

## **NEW MEMBERS:**

Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, Richmond, Va.

Mr. James C. Bowles, Jr., Columbia, Va.

Mrs. Ruth Browning, Hillcrest Heights, Md.

Col. and Mrs. Frank A. Crockett, Fork Union, Va.

Mrs. Glyde Foster, Farmville, Va.

Mrs. James H. Galt, Charlottesville, Va.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwin O. Gooch, Troy, Va.

Mrs. Charles H. Meyer, Huntington Beach, Calif.

Mr. Harry L. Nash, Waynesboro, Va.

Mrs. James Oglesby, Charlottesville, Va.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Alfred Talley, Palmyra, Va.

Mrs. E. W. Thomas, Jr., Palmyra, Va.

Mr. Overton Thomas, Richmond, Va.

Mr. Virgil G. Watkins, Durham, N.C.

Mr. Eli Weeks, Manakin, Va.

Mrs. Dorothy G. Williams, Scottsville, Va.

Mr. David Williams, Scottsville, Va.

Mrs. R. F. VanderAards, Richmond, Va.

## **FLUVANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS: 1971-1972**

*President:* Mrs. W. W. Bercaw

*First Vice-President:* Mrs. H. M. Bransford

*Second Vice-President:* Mr. Charles C. Manning

*Recording Secretary:* Mrs. John M. Hunt

*Corresponding Secretary:* Mrs. W. A. Talley

*Treasurer:* Mrs. Burwell W. Seay

*Members of the Executive Board at Large:* Mrs. Ellis P. Snead,  
Mr. William Siegfried, Mrs. Charles F. Coffey.

The Fluvanna Historical Society was founded in 1964 to collect and preserve manuscripts and other documents relating to the history of Fluvanna County in Virginia; to maintain the Old Stone Jail at the county seat, Palmyra, as a museum where antiquities of the county may be exhibited; and to encourage historical research.

Meetings of the Society are held three times a year. Annual dues are \$2.00; a life membership costs \$50.00. A bulletin is published twice a year, distributed to members free of charge. Copies can be purchased for \$2.00 single copy; \$3.00 double copy. Readers are requested to contribute any information of historical interest they may have or may be able to obtain. The society will endeavor to publish as much of this information as may be possible.

All communications should be addressed to: Mrs. Henry C. McGehee, Chairman of Publications, Fluvanna County Historical Society, Box 132, Palmyra, Virginia.



*The Bulletin of the*  
**FLUVANNA COUNTY**  
**Historical Society**

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Number 16

April 1973

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**COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA**

*Built in 1830*



# POST OFFICES OF FLUVANNA COUNTY

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## POST OFFICES OF FLUVANNA COUNTY

### Places and People

Places — how they change. people — how they move. And when people move, places grow or disappear. Fascinating. Who remembers, today, Woodside? East Point or Rockaway? Or Herndon's Store?

All the introduction necessary is in the last Bulletin. We would apologize that we never found the names of all the early postmasters, or more information about Confederate post offices, but we suspect that these two Bulletins tell you more about Fluvanna post offices than you ever really wanted to know.

These lists of postmasters certainly contain a fair sampling of Fluvanna family names — with maybe a carpetbagger or two included! As elsewhere, the peak number of post offices in Fluvanna was reached about 1895. After Rural Free Delivery was instituted, the number started to decline. For a long time the postmasters had rendered almost a personal service, much like those who, as a personal favor, carried mail "By Hand." This was illustrated in a letter from the Post Office Department to Meriweather Morris, postmaster of Columbia from 9 August 1796:

There are many Offices in which the profits are really not adequate to the trouble, yet for the accommodation of the people they are kept up. I hope you will be induced to continue in yours for the convenience of your Neighborhood. Half the post offices in the United States would be broken up, if the postmasters were not influenced by motives other than those of a pecuniary nature.

The wording of the sketches in these Bulletins has been deeply influenced by each person who kindly took time to talk to us about the tiny spot of God's green earth which they call Home. We had a problem, though. We wanted to publish *all* they told us!

We have enjoyed finding old post offices by searching records or by exploring on foot. But, as we are afraid the manuscript shows, we are easily distracted from our objective — Suddenly one comes on an amusing entry in a dusty old book, or discovers a rosy pink dogwood in full bloom away off in the woods. And then there was the day we found a bush with exquisitely formed brown flowers. Foundations of an old building that was once a post office, yes,

but we never knew there was such a thing as a brown flower. When following old roads in Fluvanna we know Rachel Fields noted truly: "A road might lead to anywhere."

— MLM<sup>CG</sup>

## **FORK UNION AREA**

*Winn's Store Post Office*  
(1826-1828)

*Winn's Tavern Post Office*  
(1825-1832)

*Winnsville Post Office*

Winn's Tavern Post Office changed its name to Winnsville in 1832, and one might conclude that Winn's Store Post Office was a predecessor of Winn's Tavern. The dates given for the post offices will not support this conclusion. If we could secure the names of the early postmasters, perhaps we could prove the location of Winn's Store.

We believe Winn's Store Post Office was located at Winn's Mill on Big Breemo Creek near present-day Shores. Thomas Winn, who was already prominent when the county was formed, owned Low Fields (now home of Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Bugg, Jr.), and, according to one source, he built a brick home named Evergreen in 1819 (the farm now owned by Mr. J. W. Minter), nearer his mill on Breemo Creek.

Thomas died in 1824, but some years previous he had turned the mill operation over to his son Geroqe. In 1821 his son John had received a license to open a tavern in his own home about four miles to the east near the Woolings, who were one of Fluvanna's first patentees. In 1819 John had built a big brick house there that became known as Winnsville. . . One year after his father's death, we believe John opened Winn's Tavern Post Office and that Brother George opened Winn's Store Post Office at the Winn Mill the next year. Winn's Store closed after two years.

John Winn became a very prosperous man, but the post office closed when he died in 1845. It is said that it was his brick home which later housed the extraordinary Fluvanna Institute.

#### *Postmasters*

Joseph Wooling	23 Feb. 1832	Philip J. Winn	16 Oct. 1844
J. Winn }	4 Dec. 1837	Patrick H. Jackson	31 July 1845
John Sclater }			

Closed to Fork Union 15 Oct. 1845

#### *Fork Union Post Office*

Fork Union Post Office opened the day Winnsville closed. Today it is housed in a modern brick building and serves an area growing in population. The Rural Route from Brems Bluff picks up mail from the post office and serves a section of the Fork Union area.

The village of Fork Union must have had its beginning when Austin Seay built a mill near his home on Crooks Creek around 1800. Then a church for four denominations was built nearby in 1824, called The Brick Union. The Charlottesville Stage Road wound its dusty way by the farms, and someone decided to open a store. We hope that a complete record of Fork Union will be written — of Temperance Hall, Corinth Hill, the gold mines, and the Fork Union Military Academy which finally “put the village on the map.”

FUMA crowns the eastern hill, and for many years it has been the cadets who, with bugle and drum, have marked time for homes and farms round about.

#### *Postmasters*

George H. Snead	15 Oct. 1845	William H. Sadler	23 Dec. 1889
Sarah E. Oppenheimer	16 Feb. 1866	Henry Davis	5 May 1897
James M. Denton	19 Feb. 1867	Andrew L. Cobb	14 Nov. 1904
Miss Julia M. Seay	19 Mar. 1874	Ernest P. Burgess	1 Oct. 1913
Mrs. Julia M. Snead	21 Feb. 1884		

Later postmasters include: C. Graham Thomas, Mrs. Bessie S. Burgess, R. K. Drumwright, Sr., R. K. Drumwright, Jr., and Mrs. Aurelia W. Griffin.

#### *Snead's Tavern Post Office*

Postal histories tell how taverns, on both sides of the Atlantic, were used as mail depositories. Snead's Tavern was one of those used in Fluvanna.

The first record we can find of Snead's Tavern is dated 1802 when John Snead received a license from the County Court “to keep an Ordinary in his own House.” (In 1794 they granted Holman Snead

a license "to keep an ordinary at the place called the Fork Ordinary.") John Snead continued to renew his license, paying the yearly tax. In 1810 he paid \$2.19, but in 1813 it was much higher, \$16.75.

In 1820 and 1821 the wording in the minutes changed to read:

On the motion of John Snead for a License to keep a house of private entertainment in his own House from this time until the 1st day of May term next, it appearing to the satisfaction of the Court that he is a man of good character and not addicted to drunkenness or gaming and it being their opinion that he will keep an orderly and useful house of entertainment, a License thereupon granted. . .

As stated in the last Bulletin this Tavern stood, according to the John Wood Map of 1820, at the forks of three roads: a road from Columbia, a road from the Court House, and a road from Old Fork Church.

The Snead's Tavern Post Office was active between the years 1813-1822. We have failed to find a list of the postmasters. One can happily assume that John Snead himself was the appointed postmaster, until someone finds records to the contrary.

### *Holmhead Post Office*

Traditionally, Mrs. Cary M. Ashlin named Holmhead Post Office to honor the author of the Holmes Readers which were popular in the schools of that day.

In 1896 Mr. Ashlin was appointed postmaster for an office to be so called, but for some reason it did not open. The office was "re-established" by the Post Office Department in 1898. Mr. Ashlin was afflicted with blindness, and his niece "Mamie" (Mary Cooke) assisted him in the store and post office and succeeded him as postmaster.

The store and post office were in the building still standing at the junction of Route No. 624 and Route No. 6. The building has been turned around; the projecting room which housed the store and post office were in the front facing the road. (There is a delightful story about the man who moved the building: "If you don't pay me for my work, I'll just turn that building right back around!") Blacksmith shops and stores were compatible, and there was such a shop on the Ashlin property.

When George Turner Seay became postmaster he moved the post office to his home at the junction of Routes 6 and 624 to the

east (across the road from the cinderblock tomato cannery Mr. J. W. Siegfried built in more recent years). Tradition holds that Mr. Seay's home was once Fork Tavern and was last run as a public house by a Mr. Pettit. Fork Tavern dates back to at least 1794. Could part of this present building be the first tavern, or is this building one of its successors?

The small frame house of worship called Holmhead Chapel, still standing on a loop of Route No. 624, was built by the folk of the neighborhood early in this century — a non-denominational church — for to some people it seemed too far to go to church at Fork Union or Columbia when the weather and roads were so bad. The building was last used by the American Legion, who placed a cannon from World War I before it as a memorial marker.

Near the Chapel stood Gravel Hill School which closed years ago and was sold to be used as a dwelling.

Not far from the post office, but on the other side of Route No. 6, is another house of worship, the Gravel Hill Sunday School Chapel. It is a small building, a happy red in color, its bell perched on the peak of the roof ready to peal out the Good News.

#### *Postmasters*

Cary M. Ashlin	4 June 1896	William B. Huggins	28 Aug. 1919
Cary M. Ashlin	4 Apr. 1898	George T. Seay	24 Apr. 1923
Mary Cooke	8 Aug. 1914		

Discontinued; moved to Columbia 31 May 1926.

#### *Cohasset Post Office*

In 1908 the Virginia Airline Railway snaked its way across the County from Strathmore on the C & O James River Line to Lindsay on the Washington Line. Little railroad stations and loading platforms, stores and post offices, sprouted on the sidings.

A Mrs. Dickey christened the first station from the south, naming it for her hometown on Boston's Back Bay in Massachusetts — Cohasset. An Indian name, it has a nice ring to it!

Farm produce, pulpwood, and railway ties were no longer hauled all the way to Bremono Bluff; the mail and anticipated household freight came nearer home. It became the railhead for the village of Fork Union and the Fork Union Military Academy.

Mr. Horace L. Branham opened a post office in his store. When that store burned, Mr. F. F. White built the store that became Brans-

ford's Store. Then Mr. Proffitt opened a store on the other side of the road, and later, a filling station was built beside Mr. Bransford's store. Up the hill Mr. Walter Melton opened a small gas station and a large second-hand business which became a mecca for those hunting the unique and the antique.

The whine of a stave mill once filled the air at Cohasset. It was just behind the F. F. White home (now Mrs. H. M. Bransford's), and did a flourishing business during World War I, shipping staves to Tregedar Iron Works in Richmond. In the day of home industries, before big corporations stifled the do-it-yourself world, Mr. Charlie Talley ran a shoe shop. The local tomato cannery provided a market for local farmers. It also increased production during the "First War," sending canned Fluvanna tomatoes to the boys "Over There." It continued under the management of F. S. White — he still processes a few cans for his own use.

As trucks began to compete with the railroads, the oil companies used the trains, confined to their static rails, to promote their own demise. Capitol Oil Company established a branch plant at Cohasset, later used by the American Oil Company. Today fuel oil is stored there. About 1930 Texaco Oil Company placed a bulk plant near the tracks.

Like the railroad, the post office, stores, and filling stations are idle, but the railroad station still stands. However, it has not become a gray ghost like others on the line. At the request of the residents, it is painted white, the center of an attractive group of Fluvanna homes.

#### *Postmasters*

Horace L. Branham	19 Dec. 1908	Annie E. White	2 Feb. 1925
Frayser F. White	29 May 1915	Annie E. Satterwhite	June 1927
		William C. Proffitt	18 July 1930

Last postmaster: Hunter M. Bransford. Closed 1970.

## **KENTS STORE AREA**

### *Bowlesville Post Office*

The first post office for the whole northeastern corner of the County was Bowlesville, named for the Bowles family who had a home near the Goochland line south of Route No. 603. Knight Bowles bought land here as early as 1800, but a son, or his grandson Judge D. W. K. Bowles, was living there when the post office opened

in 1839. An 1868 plat shows the extensive holdings of Judge Bowles and locates his residence on "the Old Yanceyville Road," east-west from Kents Store to Goochland County.

Bowlesville was a "Special Office," because it was not on any route then under contract, and the mail was to be carried without expense to the Post Office Department.

The owners of a quaint old house that could have been part of old Bowlesville, Mr. and Mrs. John P. Bradshaw, led us up the hill, following traces of the Yanceyville Road, past a village of foundations topped with piles of chimney bricks, to the site of the old mansion house, its dependencies, and its home cemeteries. In the first cemetery, outlined with a moat, we found rock tombstones, and digging up one which had fallen on its face, we found we had unearthed "K. B., d. 1820." Old Knight Bowles?

#### *Postmasters*

Nathan H. Payne                      6 Apr. 1839  
Changed to Chapel Hill 26 July 1855.

#### *Chapel Hill Post Office*

After 16 years the post office changed name and place and became Chapel Hill, located near the Byrd Methodist Chapel which then stood near our Route No. 604 (where the old Yanceyville Road leads off east to Mr. Bradshaw's home). The site was about two miles from present-day Kents Store. It was still called Chapel Hill when James M. Kent became postmaster, but probably the post office was actually moved at that time from the church site to a room in Mr. Kent's store. The name was not changed to Kents Store until 1874.

#### *Postmasters*

Nathan H. Payne	26 July 1855	James M. Kent, Jr.	7 Aug. 1856
William N. Perkins	17 Apr. 1856	Booker A. Parrish	27 Dec. 1865

Changed name to Kents Store 17 Apr. 1874.

#### *Kents Store and Quail Post Offices*

Wood's map of 1820 locates "Holland's Store," not Kents Store. James Madison Kent, Jr. opened his first store here in 1845 when his brother, M. L. Kent, brought the first load of merchandise from Columbia in a wagon drawn by oxen.



Many changes were made in Fluvanna post offices between 1880 and 1885, and Kents Store did not escape. On 16 May 1884. Mr. William J. Peers captured the post office, changed the name to "Quail," and moved it about one mile southwest to the spot we know as the entrance to the home of Col. and Mrs. R. T. St. Sauver. (What kind of tale lies behind the choice of such a name: Quail?)

Fourteen months later G. H. Kent became postmaster of Kents Store Post Office again and kept that post until he died. At his death in 1936 he was the oldest postmaster, in number of years of service, in the United States. At the age of 12 he was "acting postmaster" in his father's place in the last years of the Civil War. He was appointed postmaster at age 21 in President Grant's second administration.

Surely someday the Fluvanna County Historical Society will publish a Bulletin about Kents Store, a rural area of the County which has been progressive from its beginnings. But progress never instigated haste nor waste, nor did it leave courtesy, pride, and dignity behind.

#### *Postmasters*

B. A. Parish	17 Apr. 1874	John S. Kent	7 Sept. 1882
George H. Kent	8 June 1874		

Discontinued 25 Apr. 1883; mail to Columbia

Quail opened 16 May 1884; William J. Peers, postmaster

Changed back to Kents Store 9 July 1885

George H. Kent	9 July 1885	John R. Kirkpatrick	15 June 1937
Guy H. Kent	1 Dec. 1936	Miss Bernice Vines	25 Apr. 1940

Miss Vines became Mrs. Richardson in 1947. Upon her retirement Mrs. Lucille P. Perkins took charge.

#### *Leonis Post Office*

(8 Apr. 1899 - 15 Dec. 1903)

For four years, at the turn of the century, Mr. Robert E. Jordan kept Leonis Post Office in his store at the junction of our Routes No. 659 and No. 626. The building still stands and until recent years a sign bearing the name "Leonis" was nailed over the door of one room of the store. We cannot imagine where Mr. Jordan found the name, but his store is still there in the oak shade, its scalloped trim dripping from its low eaves, its bright paint peeling.

*McGehee's Post Office*  
(3 Feb. 1898 - 30 Jan. 1904)

McGehee's Post Office was also on Route No. 659, very near the Louisa line, not far from the Ferncliff we know today. Here Eugene E. McGehee ran a store. The postmaster was Henry V. Thomas. The office moved over the County line into Louisa County, and then, like Leonis, it closed to Kents Store when the rural route was established.

### **MECHUNK CREEK — THREE CHOPT AREA**

*Lindsay's Cross Roads — Woodlawn Post Offices*

From the National Archives came the listing of postmasters for Lindsay's Cross Roads Post Office, Fluvanna County. But where was Lindsay's Cross Roads, later named Woodlawn?

Interested folk knew Woodlawn, the old Wills' brick home on the Rivanna, and Lindsay's Ordinary on the Stage Coach Road, both near Wilmington.

But wait a minute! On the 1820 map you find Lindsay's Tavern on the Three Chopt Road near Mechunk Creek, and Joseph Martin's Gazetteer of 1835 lists Lindsay's Cross Roads Post Office 80 miles west of Richmond and 125 miles from Washington. The postmaster was Robert Lindsay, and deeds prove that Robert Lindsay from Fairfax bought several adjoining tracts of land on Three Chopt near the Creek between 1805 and 1817. County Court records tell that he received a license to run a house of entertainment in his dwelling. His son Robert W. Lindsay and a man on neighboring land, William Biggers, were also postmasters. The son changed the name to Woodlawn.

All research leads to the conclusion that Lindsay's Cross Roads was near our Beaverdam Church. (The name Lindsay's lived on as a railroad junction in Louisa County.) But what roads met here? Could this have been the junction of the Marquis Road (named for Lafayette) and Three Chopt? In Bulletin No. 12 Dr. Harris told how Lafayette built the road.

*Postmasters*

Robert Lindsay	}		Robert W. Lindsay	}	8 May 1837
David Anthum		6 Mar. 1827	William Biggers		
William Biggers					
"Changed To Woodlawn" 8 June 1838					
Robert W. Lindsay		8 June 1838			
Discontinued 23 Dec. 1838.					

*Lafayette Hill Post Office*

(31 July 1849 - 18 July 1866)

Lafayette Hill Post Office opened ten years after Woodlawn closed. Lafayette Hill is the place Lafayette camped in 1781 to join other troops to begin the march to Yorktown. He camped in the junction of Beaverdam and Mechunk Creeks (home of Mr. J. H. Carver). The post office could have been here or at Lafayette Hill Tavern (old Allegre's Tavern, home of Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Legg). William G. Wood was the postmaster.

**PALMYRA AREA**

*Timberlakes Store Post Office*

Sources differed about the years this post office served. One gives dates 1804-1805; another, 1813-1821. We found records for 1813 and 1821 which listed Rev. Walker Timberlake, postmaster.

*Rising Sun Post Office*

One source gives date 1808-1813; another, 1811-1813.

*Fluvanna Court House Post Office*

This post office opened in 1822 or 1823 with Willis McKeand, postmaster, and closed to Palmyra post office in 1827.

These three post offices were covered in the last Bulletin on page 11. We can add no information or speculation. The information we want will come to light some day — unexpectedly — but not in time to be published here!

*Palmyra Post Office*

If Walker Timberlake had not given four acres of land in 1827 for a new County seat, across the Rivanna River and nearer his mill and other business enterprises, our address would still be Fluvanna Court House, Virginia.

The new county buildings were built at Palmyra, beginning in 1828, but the post office moved in 1827. (People often speculate: Did Rev. Timberlake name Palmyra from the Biblical Tadmor?) It has long been an important post office, for the first two rural routes established in Virginia originated from Palmyra in 1896. There are two Rural Free Delivery routes going out from there today, serving a large section of the County.

As our County approaches its bicentennial, we are sure more will be published about Palmyra. Residents of "Old Flu" say we have the prettiest old courthouse in the state. It looks down on the roads and the river, but hills rise up in every direction, protecting, guarding. And. . . "No where else in the world is the sky so blue as when you look at it through those big white pillars."

<i>Postmasters</i>			
John S. Holland	1829	Elizabeth C. Garnett	29 Jan. 1866
John H. Timberlake	1833	Robert E. Hipson	26 Mar. 1866
Walker Timberlake } 12 May 1830		Walter S. Johnson	9 Feb. 1870
Abram Shepherd } 30 Apr. 1834		James C. Flannagan	28 July 1870
(?) Wilkerson		Reuben C. Strange	10 Aug. 1870
Walker Timberlake } 19 Jan. 1835		William H. Haden	17 July 1877
Abram Shepherd, Jr. }		Eli E. Tutwiler	9 May 1881
W. E. Shepherd }		James H. Landrum	5 Jan. 1883
A. G. Shepherd } 12 May 1837		George E. Bethel	18 June 1885
A. Shepherd, Jr. }		Joel Haden	26 July 1889
Woodville Jones	4 Apr. 1838	George E. Bethel	6 Apr. 1893
Wingfield M. Cosby	17 Mar. 1840	Vara V. Haden	22 Apr. 1897
Robert E. Nelson	2 Nov. 1842	Paul E. Haden	22 Nov. 1913
James M. Estes	15 Aug. 1846	Clara F. Hannah	6 Feb. 1931
William E. Shepherd	15 Jan. 1847	Louis S. Haden	23 Feb. 1931
John L. Scott	19 Apr. 1854		

Allan A. Lanford took office in 1934 and served until 1 Aug. 1970. Mrs. Ella S. Bell is the postmistress today.



## STAGE JUNCTION AREA

### *Holman — Stage Junction Post Offices*

Perhaps Holman was a family name, for a George Holman lived near there, and the first postmaster was Holman Dillard. The present postmaster has the old cancelling stamp for Holman, Virginia, still set, "Sep. 30, 1887." He said he never moved the date-setting lever, so that must be the last date the stamp was used. Actually, the name was officially changed August 31, but perhaps it took a month to secure a new stamp.

The name was changed to Stage Junction, the name found on old maps to denote this junction of two important roads where the stage coaches met. A plat of 1818 shows that the South Carolina Road (later Old Columbia Road) met the old Stage Coach Road here.

The post office has occupied the same building for the 87 years of its existence, and is believed to be one of the few post offices in the United States still in its original building. It has had only three postmasters — two generations of the same family. Holman Dillard only served 7 years, but his brother Joseph S. Dillard served 40 years, until 1933; and Joseph's son Alan G. has now served 40 years, without a day of sick leave.

Stage Junction was a natural place for an ordinary, blacksmith shop, and stables to house exchange teams for the stage coaches. The little tavern has been called Weaver's Tavern, but available records show that Littleberry Weaver also ran Fork Tavern. By 1850 Peter Manley's widow lived in the little house, and a map of 1863 shows her husband's blacksmith shop: "Manley's Shop."

The little ordinary is notable for its rock chimneys, its old well, dug through rock to provide water to supplement the "ardent spirits" offered the travellers, and the lovely, legendary yellow Harrison rose which has bloomed in the yard every spring for almost 150 years.

The Dillard's opened the store, post office, and a blacksmith shop, c. 1886 Tom Davis was the new smithy. The year 1924 is remem-

bered at Stage Junction, for in that same year Broadhurst Dillard opened a garage, the students of the one-room school were taken to Columbia by bus, and E. G. Proffitt took over the blacksmith shop. When retiring 43 years later, Proffitt recalled that at one time he used to remake over 30 wheels a month for wagons, buggies and carriages.

Named for its shady setting, Oak Grove Baptist Church was built about 1911 in sight of the post office, but by 1950 its members had scattered and its doors closed. For years empty benches waited, the bracket lamps on the walls gave no light, and the silent organ slowly came apart and piece by piece lay down upon the floor.

Like other areas, Stage Junction and nearby Greenwood Plantation have stories to tell about raiding Yankees. Were they Dahlgren's men or Sheridan's? We only remember the vivid mental picture gained from a tale: Yankees in unkempt blue chasing squawking chickens down the Stage Coach Road, collars loose, coattails flying! But now we learn it wasn't that way at all: In her old age Patty Manley told that they marched by, two abreast, from early in the morning until late at night.

#### *Postmasters*

Holman Dillard 10 Apr. 1886

Name changed to Stage Junction 31 Aug. 1887

Holman Dillard 31 Aug. 1887 Alan G. Dillard

13 Feb. 1933

Joseph S. Dillard 7 June 1893

#### *Stillman Post Office*

Stillman Post Office was located at Rivanna Mills (Ashlin's Mills) on the Rivanna River, upstream from Columbia. The first postmaster, in 1884, was John W. Rison, who had married a lady of the Ashlin family and had moved to Fluvanna with his family to run the mills.

Bulletin No. 5, about the Rivanna Navigation Company, tells of Rivanna Mills, dam, lock, and canal. Bulletin No. 10-11 gives more details about the mills and other commercial activities, and about the Stillmans and the Ashlins who conducted the business enterprises.

The Stillman Post Office, was named for the Stillman brothers, George and Samuel, who had been dead several years when the post office was established.

George Stillman, the County Justice, the State Legislator, was the acknowledged leader; but Samuel, like Andrew, the disciple of old, was the one who knew everyone — the friendly man, the genial social man, the supporter of local activities and the strength of the Episcopal Church at Columbia. One of his closest friends was Thomas W. Gilmer, Governor of Virginia, member of Congress, and President Tyler's Secretary of the Navy, killed when testing a great new gun which exploded.

The Ashlins were devoted to the Stillman brothers and many descendants were named in memory of the two men. When Wilhemina Ashlin White's first son was born at Rivanna Mills in the winter of 1855, the baby was named George Stillman.

(. . . That was a memorable winter, 1855-56. The snow lay for weeks 20 to 25 inches deep, the thermometer registered as low as 20 degrees below zero, and during this time the canal was frozen to the bottom. "The river was used as a wagon road for ten miles above Col. Ashlin's in the slack water pond feeding the canal to Columbia," wrote the infant's father, the Rev. Geo. W. White.)

When you visit the site of Stillman Post Office, you can stand by the tumbling river and look at the whiteness of sycamore limbs against the unbelievable blue of a winter sky, or look at the redbud in the stark woodland of early spring — redbud that is neither lavender nor pink but like a Victorian love story, sad but sweet. One can reach out and touch that superb stonework in the lock placed by the hand of man, and remember it was men who marked the place: old John Ashlin who built the first mill, his nephew Col. Robert White Ashlin, the Stillmans — and Mr. Rison, who built Rivanna Presbyterian Church. One thinks of *The Listeners*: Tell them we came, we said.

#### Postmasters

John W. Rison	21 Oct. 1884	John W. Clarke	5 Dec. 1898
Alfonso V. Perkins	1 Feb. 1898		

Closed to Columbia 14 June 1899.

## TROY AREA

### *Hunter's Lodge Post Office*

When Capt. C. R. Irving took down the old log house on U.S. Route No. 15 near Troy and moved it to Union Mills, folk remembered, "That was old Hunter's Lodge," Now "lodge" is not a Fluvanna word; they said "ordinary" or tavern." There was an ordinary called Hunter's Lodge — and a store, post office, and blacksmith shop.

The place evidently took its name from the owner, William M. Hunter, who purchased the land in 1850. A deed states that Hunter had recently built a building there. However, some say the place took its name as a gathering place for ardent fox hunters.

The post office did not immediately close when the railroad was put through, although Troy Station was close by. The last postmaster, Robert M. Flanagan, walked to the station to get the mail and carried it home on his back.

A store cash book, beginning 20 April, 1870, was kept by postmaster George A. Payne. In January 1873 he received a draft from the Post Office Department for \$22.34 and in December, 1875, \$34. On October 1, 1876, he noted he had sold \$7.75 in stamps during the past quarter; the next quarter he sold \$12.03; usually averaging between twelve and fifteen dollars a quarter.

Payne recorded that he paid \$8.33 for a license to run an ordinary. In January 1873 he paid \$7 for whiskey and in May 1873 he paid \$25 for brandy. His blacksmith shop was a busy place. His 1877 entries include a 44 cents charge for sharpening eleven harrow teeth, 54 cents for sharpening a coulter, and 10 cents for tempering an axe.

Besides Payne's Store, during the seventies four other stores listed their addresses as Hunter's Lodge; William Belamy, C. B. Bland, B. F. Haden, and White and Appleberry. By 1890 W. J. Payne ran the store and post office, T. J. Proffitt built coaches and wagons and E. Snead was the local physician. L. D. Haden, J. F. Omohundro and R. S. White ran mills and J. D. Brown and S. A. Morris were millwrights.

It is nice that the name lives on in a store and a farm, for "Hunter's Lodge" has a musical ring to it — like the echo of a hunter's horn."



### *Postmasters*

Robert W. Gentry	29 June 1866	William D. Richardson	7 Apr. 1904
George A. Payne	6 Dec. 1871	Schuyler A. King	13 Sept. 1905
William J. Payne	9 May 1881	Joseph S. Crowder	1 Sept. 1909
John N. Pace	23 Apr. 1897	Robert M. Flanagan	9 Feb. 1911

Closed to Troy 26 Feb. 1913

### *Baugh Post Office*

(9 July 1897 - 29 June 1901)

If the postal records had not noted that Baugh Post Office was closed to Hunter's Lodge in 1901, we would never have found where it was located. Our only other clue was the name of the only postmaster: Ellis T. Scott. We found no explanation for the name "Baugh." The post office was located in Scott's small store just north of St. James Church (on Route No. 644), and he is the only Negro postmaster we have identified.

### *Troy Post Office*

The first railroad building at Troy was only a shed and the depot was called "Clarkland." It was Capt. T. O. Troy who built the Virginia Airline across the County, and folk tell this: The Captain was a great big fellow, and the day he cut a persimmon tree (if he was in Fluvanna, you know it was bound to be a persimmon tree!) to clear for the railroad station, he said he would name it for himself and call it Troy.

When the post office first moved to Troy, it was housed in the station. In 1934 the post office opened in Hasher's Store. The first store was built by James A. Hasher and his son, J. B. Hasher, built the present one. Mr. Hasher and his son, Ralph, run this general store, a feed and farm supply store, and the only active wood yard left on the railroad. The station stood for some years unused and was finally taken down. Now the County is fighting to keep the railroad active.

Local residents have a vivid memory of Jordan Cavanaugh, who carried the mail to Keswick. He served a number of boxes on the way, and the mail for those he carefully stacked in order in his capacious hat, plopped the hat on his head and climbed into his cart. The boxing in the wheels was dreadfully worn, and he lurched up the rutted roads, each wheel turning with "a wibble and a wobble, and a clack, clack, clack!"

*Postmasters*

Robert M. Flanagan	26 Feb. 1913	J. O. Williams, Sr.	13 Aug. 1934
Henry E. Cooke	20 Aug. 1913	Mrs. Kathleen K. Hasher	
Seth Palmer	5 June 1926		15 Aug. 1948
		Ralph B. Hasher	1 Sept. 1972

*Wildwood Post Office*

There had been Flanagan's Landing on the Rivanna and Flanagan's Mill on Ballenger Creek, but the Railroad took to the highland between the two, and Thomas J. Wood named the station and the post office Wildwood. Wildwood is not a pun on his surname. Local people say he just thought the woodland there so very pretty.

The post office opened two years after the Railroad and lasted until about 1960. After the retirement of Mr. W. A. Pace, it was run as a rural sub-station under contract, first by Mrs. Olene F. Pace and then by Mrs. Nora C. Payne. It closed May 31, 1962 and the area is now served by a route from Palmyra.

Old Route No. 15 wound back and forth over the railroad tracks, passing the site of Old Broken Backt Church south of the station and following the tracks northeast to Salem Methodist Church, the offspring of Broken Backt.

The highway was straightened, and W. A. Pace built a store and a two-room tourist home on the other side of the road. That store burned, and Earl Wright built the present cinderblock structure. Before it closed, the post office was moved into two smaller buildings, the last one a tiny building across the main highway.

A garage was built beside the store and is still operating, but Mr. Charles Lloyd closed his store, and the cinderblock building is now plumbing headquarters for Mr. Howard Thurston. In Mr. Wood's old store-dwelling Mr. and Mrs. Paul Stauffer run a home bakery. They follow a Fluvanna tradition for home industries, an operation kin to the old cannery that Mr. W. N. Hannah built down at the bottom of the hill to process tomatoes.

*Postmasters*

Thomas J. Wood	9 June 1910	W. A. Pace	c. 1945
Blanche M. Wood	15 Oct. 1924		

## UNION MILLS

The village of old Union Mills on the Rivanna was Fluvanna's "Natchez-Under-the-Hill" and it has as nearly disappeared. Bulletins No. 5 and No. 10-11 describe the early days of this "river port" and commercial center. The first post office was there near the river. Later it was moved to the small brick building still standing in the yard at The Union, and then to the store at Harold G. King's. At first the office was served by stage coaches on the Post Road, and in time Union Mills served other offices in the area.

We are not sure there was only one postmaster from 1813 to 1819, but from 1819 it certainly had frequent changes in personnel. In the next 104 years there were over 35 appointments. There must have been keen competition for the position in 1904! Hattie A. McDonald won it for a third term lasting 19 years. After her Harold G. King was appointed 12 May 1923, and served 28 years.

After the founding Timberlakes and Magruder's dissolved partnership in the mills and store, we find new names with a Union Mills address: In 1868 Bullock and Magruder were merchants, and W. J. Bragg and Gooch and Allen ran mills. In 1877 W. R. Cocke and D. R. Boston were area merchants and the Union Mill Company ran the big cotton mill.

By 1890 James Armstrong and Co. ran The Union Mill and W. J. McDonald, ex-postmaster, was a general merchant who built wagons and coaches, ran a corn and flour mill, a tannery, and a distillery. Other water-powered mills, including saw mills, were those of D. R. Boston, G. W. Bragg, Cocke Brothers and Henry Payne, with two millwrights, J. A. and W. T. Walker. J. A. Walker was also the undertaker, supplying "coffins of pine."

### *Postmasters*

James W. Jones	1813	Benjamin H. Jones	14 Oct. 1847
James I. Jones	1819	Gideon A. Strange	7 Dec. 1848
Charles C. Parrett }		James A. Hughes	14 July 1852
Benjamin Pace }	1821	James C. Purvis	18 May 1854
Benjamin Pace	1823	James R. Campbell	28 June 1855
Robert S. Jones	1829	Thomas C. Morris	4 Nov. 1858
Robert S. Jones	26 June 1837	James W. Magruder	25 Apr. 1861
Ahikam Westerman	24 July 1837	John H. Haggard	12 Jan. 1866
Claudius Tompkins	11 Aug. 1840	Walter Brownley	25 June 1873
William J. Payne	29 July 1845	Thomas A. Vest	11 Aug. 1873

John T. Woodson	9 Feb. 1874	Donna J. Sclater	7 May 1896
James H. Beach	8 May 1874	Andrew Stone	18 Aug. 1898
Walter Brownley	19 May 1874	William T. Payne	14 Oct. 1902
Chastain C. Cocke	14 Jan. 1878	John L. Walker	25 Mar. 1904
Octavius H. Webb	2 Oct. 1882	(Appointment rescinded	4 May
W. L. McDonald	9 Mar. 1886	1904)	
Hattie C. McDonald	19 Mar. 1886	Mabel Mundy	4 May 1904
George H. Webb	23 Dec. 1889	(Appointment rescinded	2 Nov.
John W. Pace	18 Apr. 1891	1904)	
Hattie C. McDonald	19 May 1893	Hattie C. McDonald	2 Nov. 1904
James H. Reigart	30 Dec. 1895	Harold G. King	12 May 1923

Closed in 1951

## WILMINGTON

Wilmington was one of four post offices served by the stages on the Fluvanna Stage Coach, or Post, Road in 1813. When stage coaches first carried mail, they were not under contract to the government, but in the U.S. they became part of the postal service in 1782. By 1799 more than 16,000 miles of post roads had been established.

It has been said that Wilmington was the first post office opened in the County. This tradition may have gained support when special envelopes were printed some years ago to mark National Air Mail Week. The envelopes bear the name of the post office and state that it was established in 1813. Within a black border on the envelope is this information:

In 1824 Gen'l de Lafayette was entertained here by the ladies and forty old veterans. A rural free delivery route was established here in 1904.

Thanks to Misses Frances and Marion Sadler we have the most complete list of postmasters for Wilmington. These ladies have a very old letter addressed to Stephen Joseph Perkins, dated 1834. It cost 25¢ to send the letter from Kentucky to Wilmington.

Wilmington, being on a stage road, is an old settlement with a church that dates back to 1774. But it would take a very long epistle indeed to tell about the churches established there, the schools, the home industries, and the two big taverns with their blacksmith shops and stables to feed and lodge man and beast. It had its finest hour when Lafayette visited there while on his nostalgic tour in 1824, and Wilmington lived for years, happy in the memory of that visit.

### *Postmasters*

George W. Richardson	26 Feb. 1813	William A. Nicholson	2 Nov. 1892
Thomas W. Glass	2 June 1817	Richard Omohundro	21 Apr. 1893
Pleasant Howard	18 Feb. 1824	Richard S. Omohundro	
William J. Cole	17 Feb. 1829		12 June 1896
Daniel Lumis	25 May 1837	John W. Holland, Jr.	22 Oct. 1920
H. W. Richardson }		Charles L. Sadler	1 Dec. 1922
Richard Omohundro, Jr.		Thomas H. Shepherd, Jr.	
	13 Feb. 1840		17 Feb. 1938
Wm. B. Payne	29 Sept. 1852	Thomas H. Griffin	31 Dec. 1946
Thomas H. Perkins }		Della B. Griffin	1 Oct. 1961
Miss Dollie A. Kirtley	7 Sept. 1866		

## UPPER JAMES

### *Seven Islands Post Office*

"There was once a road through the woods," wrote Rudyard Kipling, but surely we had lost the road in that last tangle of briars and honeysuckle. . . We were hiking to Seven Islands, guided by an old stone road marker erected in 1828 by General John Hartwell Cocke, which states "Right - 7 Isles Mills." We wanted to learn more about Virgin's Mill on Rockfish Run for Bulletin No. 10-11. (We were fascinated to find that a creek in Fluvanna was once called a "Run!") We considered hiking down the railroad to start home, but instead we left by way of a large high field above the millpond. It is still called "The Mulberry Field," a name left over from the great silk-worm experiment instigated by Cocke.

We had tried, unsuccessfully, to peer back into history before the formation of the county to secure the early history of Seven Isles Church. We have found only one clue: Seven Isles was the only place in present-day Fluvanna worthy of mention by Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson when they drew their map in 1751.

Seven Islands was important — Fluvanna's first river port. Its most famous resident was William Henry, who represented Fluvanna in the General Assembly during the same period his brother, Patrick, was Governor. Perhaps William Henry was instrumental in the formation of Seven Isles Church.

We have a few glimpses of Seven Islands: In 1868 Robert Nicholas operated the mill, and by 1877 Samuel S. Brigg had a general store

there. Marion L. Tutwiler was the last miller and his daughter, Mrs. Leona C. Moore, was the last postmistress.

Today the house stands empty, the roses and shrubs are overgrown, no boats anchor in the old boat basin beyond the garden gate. Beside the railroad tracks, the James sparkles in the sunlight. It seems like a dream: Impossible that the water in the river keeps flowing by endlessly, ceaselessly, though there is no human eye to see.

#### *Postmasters*

Joseph Pace	28 Sept. 1842	William H. Ancell	31 July 1876
Samuel S. Bugg	9 Mar. 1846	Marion L. Tutwiler	21 Mar. 1878
Martin S. Tutwiler	17 Nov. 1865	Carrie E. Tutwiler	11 May 1905
Marion S. Tutwiler	21 Feb. 1870	Leona C. Moore	7 July 1926
C. R. F. Seay	12 Dec. 1870		

Local records for the post offices on the upper James were destroyed by floods, but this post office closed about 1933.

#### *Shores Post Office*

"Still sits the schoolhouse by the road,  
A ragged beggar sleeping. . ." — Whittier

For years the old schoolhouse beside the road to Shores has been the first hint that you were approaching a village. The building is a forlorn wreck today, but you still see Seay's Chapel, an outgrowth of Seven Isles Church; Melrose, a tall dignified old brick home; and Pleasant Hill, over on High Hill, banked with tall cedars.

Low Fields, an old brick house, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Bugg, Jr., is set back from the river on a hill, surrounded by rolling pastures. Western View, a wonderfully unique old house on the bluff above the James, has fallen into disrepair, hidden behind a jungle of trees, honeysuckle and briars. But it was Mr. Andrew Seay we always envied, for from his front porch on the steep hill, you looked almost straight down into the swift ever-changing, ever-rushing waters of the James.

The members of the Seay family built homes in the area and ran the post office. In 1877 C. R. F. and A. J. Seay were operating the Middleton Mills which were described in Bulletin No. 10-11. We have learned that Gen. John Hartwell Cocke owned the Mills for years before the Yankees burned it. This is interesting, for the stone arches beside the old Canal are so like the stone arches near the mill at

Bremo. These arches allowed water to flow from the James River-Kanawha Canal to the mill. They alone remain.

Shores is a family name. Thomas Shores, Sr., was here in 1782 with a family of six. Almost a hundred years later, 1879, Shores Post Office opened.

Many factors contributed to its development. First, the river, then the canal, then the railroad. As Seven Isles lost its mill and diminished as a center of trade, Shores grew. In 1890 Thomas McCulloch built coaches and wagons at Shores, Mrs. C. L. Scruggs ran a hotel, A. L. Seay kept a general store, J. S. Stanton and Co. operated a saw-mill, and William Duncan was the millwright. Riley Nixon had a cooper shop there.

Mail came on the train from Richmond in the morning and from Lynchburg in the afternoon. Until the post office closed, January 31, 1956, a long rural route served patrons from Shores to Palmyra, including the Central Plains area almost to Cohasset, and the south side of the Rivanna, including Cunningham.

Today the railroad station and store are gone. No buildings remain at the foot of the hill. Perhaps it is best. The river never wanted them there. Never a placid stream, periodically the James overflows its banks, gnaws at the gravel bed of the railroad, laps at the cliffs, and becomes a roaring torrent, reminding man that he is not — never has been and cannot be — omnipotent.

#### *Postmasters*

John D. Snoddy	28 Nov. 1879	Philip B. Seay	16 Apr. 1923
Andrew J. Seay	19 Sept. 1882	Loutrelle H. Seay	
Arthur L. Seay	31 July 1899		

Closed at 5 p.m., 31 January, 1956, with the postmaster and storekeeper both in tears (so it is said).

#### *Hardware-Vallena Post Offices*

Some folks say that Hardware was so named because "it was a hard way to go." But "Hardwar" was the most inland point of navigation on the Ganges River in India. Did an early navigator-explorer map the country and write the name beside the little river that turned and twisted its way from the mountains? Surely he found it "a hard way to go."

A post office named Hardware opened in July 1838, the year H. B. Dickinson built the beautiful cut-stone aqueduct for the James

River-Kanawha Canal, and the canal and locks were being built by the James. This post office closed in 1840 when the construction was completed, and then two years later an office opened at the established center of Seven Islands.

On February 3, 1881 the First Assistant Postmaster General of the United States wrote Frank C. Moon, who had applied for a new post office to be opened at Hardware. The first name considered for the proposed office was "Moon's," but on the official form the name was crossed out and "Vallena" substituted, written with a fine Spencerian flourish. The government form instructed, "Select a short name . . . which when written, will not resemble the name of any other post office in the United States."

Mr. Moon informed the government that there was a mail route presently passing his site, "the James River and Kanawha Canal which is now being substituted by R. and A. R. Road" (Richmond and Allegheny Rail Road). He also stated the two nearest post offices on the same route were Seven Islands on one side and Payne's on the other. The attached map showed the proposed post office would be at the junction of the Hardware and James Rivers and noted that Moon's Ferry crossed the James there. The Topography Office noted, in October of the same year, 1881, that the railroad station would be called Hardware Depot.

Over a century before this, William Henry's father gave him a large tract of land on the Hardware and the first minutes of the County note that "Wm. Henry, Gentleman," applied for permission to dam the Hardware to erect a water grist mill. Later Hardware became one of the important river ports for the trans-shipment of farm produce which rolled in from the highland farms reaching back into the mountains, and the busy men of Hardware built substantial homes. Mt. Airy, Oak Grove and Bledsoe Hall remain.

The general merchant in 1890 was William C. White — address, Vallena, Virginia. Also listed at this address were the John B. Kidd Mill on the Hardware River and Samuel S. Butler, millwright and miller. At the mill they operated a blacksmith shop and sawmill. By way of today's roads the old mill site seems nearer Payne's than Hardware, for you find the old milldam at the southern tip of the incredible Muleshoe Bend of the River, where it completes its tortuous convolutions and straightens out for its run to the James. This area is being developed today as a State hunting preserve.

The first railroad station burned and the next was built to the east



nearer the tracks. Bill Taylor was one of the last telegraph operators at the depot and he lived in a house he built at the top of the hill, now the home of Mrs. Jake Napier. Postmaster White lived in the house now occupied by Miss Elizabeth Ritchie. Mr. O. G. Arrington operated a store, a boat landing, a tomato cannery, and a wood yard, and lived above the store. When Mr. Percy Haden closed that store, it became a dwelling. There were two stores there at one time, for Mr. Haden opened his first store in 1914 in a building across the road. When vacant, his building was used for prayer meetings. Did the folk at the prayer meetings worry about the parties held at The Log Cabin up the road?

#### *Postmasters*

##### Vallena:

Frank C. Moon	7 Apr. 1881	Edward L. Pleasants	28 July 1885
William J. Staples	29 Jan. 1883	William C. White	16 June 1891
Name changed to Hardware 20 Oct. 1896			

##### Hardware:

Aaron Bledsoe	20 July 1838		
Discontinued 24 Apr. 1840			
William C. White	20 Oct. 1896	Later:	
Eugenia E. White	20 Dec. 1902	Percy Haden	
William C. Taylor	6 Apr. 1910	Marshall Haden	
Closed 31 May 1939			

#### *Payne's Post Office*

Existing records of man's sojourn on this earth show that ownership of home and land has long been important. So great was a man's pride of ownership that our forefathers were fond of giving their names to their dwelling places. If the owner did not, the neighbors did. The Psalmist put it this way: "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling place to all generations. They call their lands after their own names."

Such a place was Payne's on the James River, and though the dwellings and store are gone, the name persists. It was also called "Payne's Landing," perhaps because this was a "landing" for river boats and, later, canal boats. Or the name could have designated the ferry which crossed the James here, bearing wagons loaded with railroad ties and farm produce.

Soon after the railroad was laid on the canal towpath in 1881, Payne's Post Office opened. This post office moved across the James

from Buckingham County where it had been established in 1880. On the last record we have for this post office, first day of January, 1925, the name was changed to "Payne."

Many family names are found in records of this area: Thomas, Kidd, Omohundro, Maxey, Pleasant, Burgess and Childress. One Mr. Childress bore the brave name of Benjamin Franklin. In 1890 outstanding farmers were J. B. Kidd, D. W. Anderson, J. J. Ballard, and E. Moon.

The road to Payne's is still maintained past Berea Chapel, which began early in this century in a brush arbor, with hewn logs for benches. Parrot Butler gave the lumber for the small church and Jerry Cleveland built it. Not far from the Chapel a road turns off to Old Kidd's Mill. Here on a hill above the millsite on the Hardware River Samuella W. Maxey, the last postmistress at Payne's, is buried in a periwinkle-covered family cemetery.

There was only one "whistle stop" between Payne's and Scottsville, and this was Nicholas's Siding. You reached Nicholas from the highland by taking Beale's Lane.

Payne's Landing is deserted today. In winter the cold winds from the Blue Ridge blow down the valley of the James, whistling around the rock cliffs; but in summer the fishermen brave the deep ruts of the old road down the hill. Columbine blooms on the cliffs and brambly roses cover the rock foundations of houses and store; heat waves shimmer above the tracks and high above the river buzzards slowly circle. One token of civilization remained when we visited there: On a pole balanced a box and within the box was an old-fashioned "crank" telephone with such printed instructions as "ring two shorts for Strathmore!"

#### *Postmasters*

Robert P. Terry	29 Jan. 1883	Annie H. Pleasants	8 Nov. 1897
Samuel L. Burks	1 Sept. 1885	Samuella W. Maxey	1 Apr. 1900
C. S. Fensom	13 Nov. 1890	John C. Turner	23 Mar. 1908
Mrs. Ella Fensom	30 Jan. 1891	Samuella W. Maxey	6 Mar. 1916
William T. McFall	24 Sept. 1891	Mary R. Parr	12 July 1919
William L. Stegar	14 July 1892	Samuella W. Maxey	18 May 1920
Randolph R. Pleasants	21 Aug. 1897		

Changed name to Payne, 1 January 1925; closed c. 1926.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### *Laurel Spring Post Office*

(1825 - 1837)

We did not find this post office, which we first noted in Bulletin No. 9 as located 61 miles N.W. by W. from Richmond in 1835. We found some records which placed Laurel Spring in Albemarle, so we conclude that it was on the Fluvanna-Albemarle line, though we can think of no spring large enough to have a post office named for it except the medicinal spring near Scottsville that folk know as Albevana Springs.

In 1829 Joseph Farrar was postmaster and in 1833, Owen C. Bransford.

### *Pine Level Post Office*

(13 July 1841 - 9 Nov. 1842)

A deed of 1840 mentions that J. W. Boatwright had a store "where he now lives," and a deed of trust of September, 1841, states that his store was on the Three Notched Road. We feel these two deeds locate Pine Level, as John W. Boatwright was the only postmaster in the year and four months the post office was open.

### *Cherry Grove Post Office*

(8 Aug. 1843 - 18 Sept. 1843)

This post office was open exactly one month and ten days. One wonders at its short life. Horatio J. Timberlake was the postmaster. He was a partner in the store at Union Mills, but we cannot find he ever owned property. In 1843 his father made his home in the big brick Timberlake house near the Mills.

### *Elliottsville Post Office*

(17 July 1866 - 25 Aug. 1868)

Philip C. Rogers was the postmaster of Elliottsville. Since this post office was open only two years, we did not bother the Archives in Washington about its location. Nobody knows where it was?

**FLUVANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OFFICERS: 1972-73**

*President:* Mrs. W. W. Bercaw

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Mr. William Siegfried, Mrs. Charles F. Coffey.

The Fluvanna Historical Society was founded in 1964 to collect and preserve manuscripts and other documents relating to the history of Fluvanna County in Virginia; to maintain the Old Stone Jail at the county seat, Palmyra, as a museum where antiquities of the county may be exhibited; and to encourage historical research.

Meetings of the Society are held three times a year. Annual dues are \$2.00; a life membership costs \$50.00. A bulletin is published twice a year, distributed to members free of charge. Copies can be purchased for \$2.00 single copy; \$3.00 double copy. Readers are requested to contribute any information of historical interest they may have or may be able to obtain. The society will endeavor to publish as much of this information as may be possible.

All communications should be addressed to: Mrs. Henry C. McGehee, Chairman of Publications, Fluvanna County Historical Society, Box 132, Palmyra, Virginia.



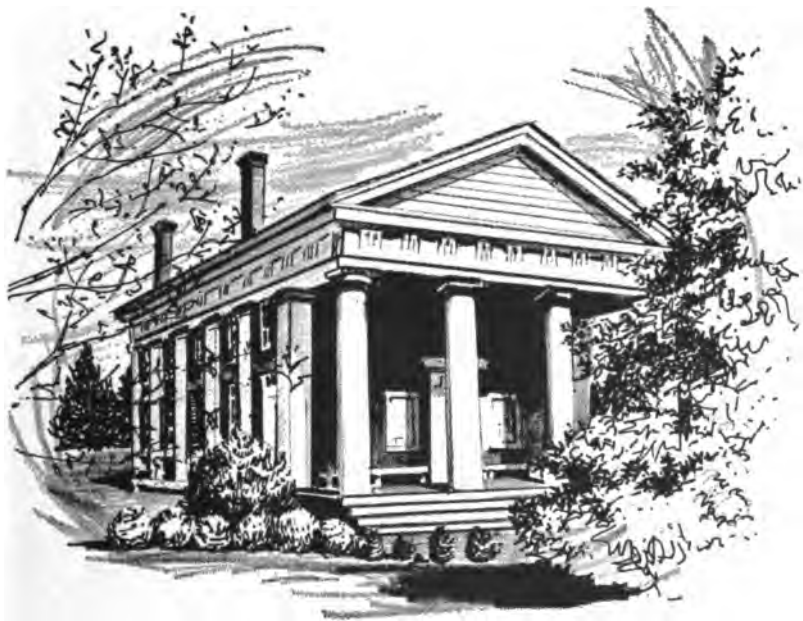
*The Bulletin of the*  
**FLUVANNA COUNTY**  
**Historical Society**

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October 1973

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**COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA**

*Built in 1830*





*Academy seal designed by Colonel C. E. Crosland in 1916*

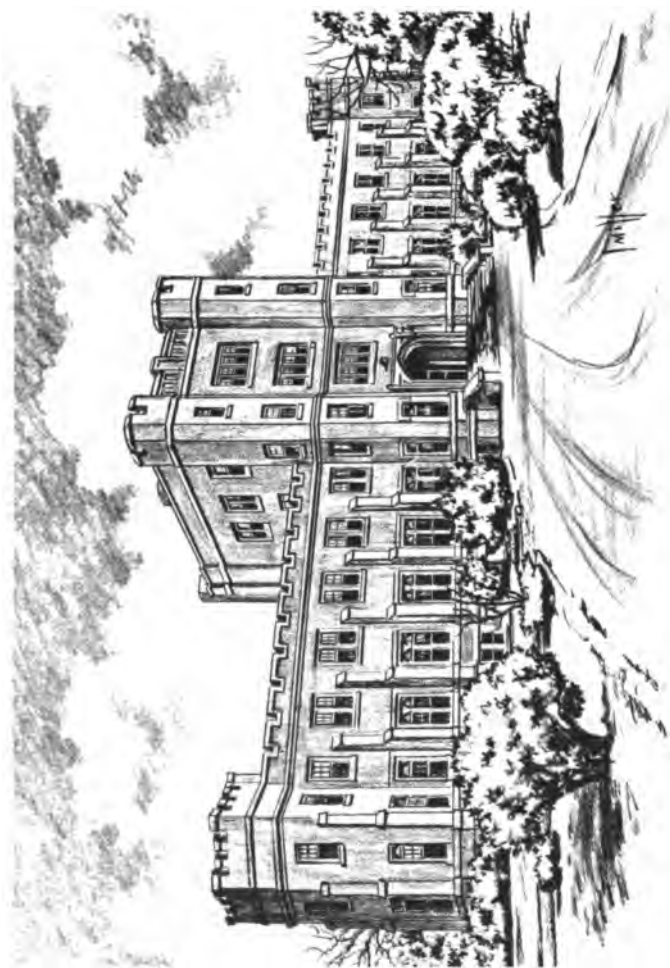
### **To Fork Union!**

Time has fled, and fickle Change,  
Her shifting patterns undenied,  
A gentle hill at last has ranged  
With stately campus built in pride;  
Where myriad youth in eager quest,  
Through years now seventy and five,  
In new recruitment of their zest  
Tomorrow's worlds have learned to guide.  
Fork Union, may you ever train  
Bold efforts toward the best,  
That youth may know and men declaim  
Your transcendental gifts for fame.

Clio, Muse, enhance this voice,  
The past in essence speaking,  
To truly limn an old, old choice,  
That Memory not go sleeping.

- L. H. Halliburton





*Hatcher Hall. Fork Union Military Academy*

## **THE DREAM STILL LIVES!**

### **Historical Portrait of Fork Union Military Academy in Its Diamond Jubilee Year**

... Here once walked  
The men of dreams. . .  
Now down the trackless hollow years  
That swallowed them, but not their song  
We send response . . . the dream still lives!

- Paul Green  
"The Lost Colony"

### **Introduction**

Fluvanna County, Virginia, now rapidly approaching the bicentennial year of its establishment, 1977, is in effect a geographical treasury, zealously safeguarding the memory of numerous historical events and circumstances which have occurred within her borders. On appropriate occasions these are recalled and celebrated with merited pride and enthusiasm.

This is, of course, as it should be; a people unmindful of or disinterested in their past are strange, indeed, alienated as they are from a basic pattern of their culture and thus most unlikely to contribute in their own times anything of significance to the continuing human saga.

Among the historical stories having a Fluvanna County locale, very few, if any, could be more interesting or more suggestive of a genuine legacy from the past than that of the founding and growth through the years of Fork Union Military Academy at Fork Union, Virginia. In this year of her seventy-fifth birthday, Fork Union Military Academy is recognized throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and, in truth, nationwide as an outstanding educational institution which strives earnestly and effectively to develop, in the words of the famous Crosland motto, the "mind, body, and spirit" of each young man who studies there.

Located on gently rising land overlooking the small, neat, and attractive village for which it named, the Academy possesses a tract of land in excess of 500 acres on a portion of which stands a cluster of more than a dozen handsome, modern buildings amid beautifully-landscaped grounds.

Present property value is estimated at \$4,903,695; current endowment is approximately \$1,285,695; and the operating budget for the 1972-1973 academic year was in excess of \$2,000,000.

A total enrollment of more than 600 young men in both Junior and Senior divisions of the Academy attests — particularly in this time of travail for so many private schools — the enduring worth and significance of an education “in the Fork Union manner.”

Circumstances attending the founding of Fork Union Military Academy, and the fact of its existence today as the tangible realization of a long-ago dream by a handful of extraordinarily farsighted Fluvanna County citizens, are the twin themes which this *Bulletin* intends to illuminate. These citizens were as faithful in their devotion to the idea that education is the lamp of human progress as they were determined at great personal sacrifice to seek actively the best for their children.

As an exercise in historical portraiture, the Fork Union story reveals and emphasizes, among other things, that many of the triumphs of the present are, in terms of ultimate origins, gifts from yesteryear. To acknowledge these, as we do, and further to use them as stepping stones to a larger advancement of man, are essential purposes of historical discourse.

### **The Founding of the Academy**

In 1898, the year of the founding of Fork Union Military Academy, William McKinley was in his second year as President of the United States and James Hoge Tyler began the first year of his administration as Governor of Virginia. The Spanish-American War, America's “splendid little conflict,” in the words of Theodore Roosevelt, was fought and won with spectacular success between April and August, the Paris Peace Treaty of December 10, 1898 ending our country's most popular and least necessary adventure in warfare.

At the same time that the nation reached perhaps a high watermark in its flirtation with imperialism, the southern section of the United States was recovering from the ravages of the Civil War which had ended only thirty-three years previously at Appomattox.

In Virginia, as in other Southern states, the economic facts of life were improved only in terms of being difficult, rather than harsh, and dislocations of every kind were still very present aftermaths of the most terrible war the United States had ever known. Most poignant of all was the fact that in nearly every home a certain emptiness of spirit still prevailed when memory recalled that loved ones lost in the cause of the Confederacy would, indeed, never return.

On the warm Friday evening of September 30, 1898, a small group of citizens gathered at Careby Hall, the summer home of Dr. William E. Hatcher (1834-1912) in Fork Union, Virginia. They had come, at Dr. Hatcher's invitation, to discuss the possibility of establishing in this tiny central Virginia village an educational opportunity for local young people — an opportunity which would enable them to advance beyond the level of elementary instruction and thus prepare them for college matriculation.

At this particular time, the children of Fluvanna County residents could acquire college preparatory work only by leaving the home community and going many miles away to the nearest centers of advanced learning. Most parents could not afford the expense of this requirement; those who could, usually sent only their daughters for further instruction because the presence at home of young boys was absolutely essential in farming activities upon which the economy of the area rested.

Dr. Hatcher, a distinguished Baptist clergyman, a native of Bedford County, Virginia, and then the pastor of Grace Street Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia, loved the scenic, pastoral, and occasionally mountain-girt countryside of Fluvanna and had chosen Fork Union, the home of his wife, the former Virginia Snead, as the site of a summer retreat from the heat, noise, and confusions of the city of Richmond. He was vocal in his admiration of the stalwart, hard-working, and proudly independent people of Fluvanna and no less vocal in

his concern relative to the educational difficulties of their children, particularly young boys with whom he had always known a substantial empathy.

The result of many hours of discussion of Careby Hall was the establishment of a Board of Guarantors of ten members, including Dr. Hatcher, to underwrite the cost and assume all other responsibilities of the founding and operation of Fork Union Academy, predecessor of Fork Union Military Academy of this day.

Eight men and two women pledged various sums of money (\$500 in all) in a Guarantors' Agreement to support the new "classical" school and named Dr. Hatcher chairman of the group.

Dr. Hatcher, after consultations with President F. W. Boatwright of Richmond College, employed Julian Bowie Martin of Caroline County, Virginia, twenty-seven years old and a graduate of Richmond College (class of 1898), to be the principal of and only teacher in the new school. His salary was \$47.50 for each of seven months of the first academic year, 1898-1899.

The original membership of the Board of Guarantors should forever be remembered by those who care for Fork Union Military Academy. They had faith in young people, faith in the potentialities of the future, and altruistic spirit which prompted them freely to donate, in genuine sacrifice, the funds necessary to create an educational institution in an era and in an area which must be characterized as economically depressed. Collectively, these men and women — a majority of them farmers and small merchants, and most of them members of the large Snead family of Fluvanna — were the real founders of Fork Union Military Academy.

The ten individuals who signed the Guarantors' Agreement — the Academy's legal instrument of birth — together with the inclusive dates of their lives, were as follows: Dr. William Eldridge Hatcher (1834-1912), Chairman; Captain Charles Goodall Snead (1840-1925), Vice-Chairman; William Pumphrey Snead (1823-1903); William Frank Snead (1855-1912); Benjamin Hadad Snead (1826-1919); Dr. George Holman Snead (1834-1911); William Henry Sadler (1852-1947); Wesley Wilmer Hughes (1837-1921); Julia Moore Seay Snead —

Mrs. William Pumphrey Snead (1847-1939); and Zaidee Vivian Johnson Kie — Mrs. George Stillman Kie (1857-1929).

Joining the Board of Guarantors shortly thereafter, and before it was constituted a Board of Trustees, were five other persons. These men, although they did not sign the Guarantors' Agreement, are nevertheless recognized as original Guarantors; obviously, then, there were fifteen Guarantors altogether.

These last five men were Rufus Judson Snead (1854-1928); Cornelius Pollard Snead (1830-1912); Gilmer Jones Snead (1873-1938); George Marion Bashaw (1860-1946); and Charles Bell Wood (1858-1932).

On Saturday morning, October 15, 1898, Fork Union Academy opened its doors for the education of youth. A solemn religious ceremony marking this event was held in the Old Brick Meeting House, now Fork Union Baptist Church, which still stands today in the fork of the road within the village of Fork Union.

A mass meeting was addressed by Dr. Hatcher and by Dr. Charles H. Ryland, Treasurer of Richmond College and a life-long friend of Dr. Hatcher's, who had come to render invaluable assistance to the Academy's principal founder and to the other Guarantors in the organization of the new school.

Across the road from the church, a two-story frame house had been rented from Mrs. Susan Payne Cooper; after a few essential interior alterations, it now was ready to accommodate the Academy's first class of nineteen students — 14 boys and 5 girls. This house, later to be named "Cumnor," is still standing today; in the 1940's it was substantially renovated, changing both exterior and interior appearances. Major and Mrs. A. Paul Thompson currently reside in the historic and attractive old house. It was used by the Academy for two years — until 1900 when the first building on Fork Union's present campus, Academy Hall (later Snead Hall), was erected at a cost of \$5000 raised through public subscription.

### **The Fledgling Grows Stronger**

The early years of Fork Union Academy were, to the surprise of many, quite successful ones; Fluvanna County citi-

zens endorsed the new school enthusiastically, giving it complete moral support and as much financial assistance as their limited means would allow. It is truly amazing what they were able to accomplish in the Academy's behalf with Dr. Hatcher as their indefatigable leader.

Retiring from his post as pastor of Grace Street Baptist Church in Richmond in 1901, Dr. Hatcher sold his Richmond home and moved to Fork Union permanently where he could maintain a close supervision over "the pet of my evening years," as he affectionately referred to the Academy. For the last fourteen years of his life, until his death at Careby Hall on August 24, 1912, Dr. Hatcher was president of the Board of Trustees — which had been established by the Guarantors on October 14, 1899 — and president of the Academy itself. It is safe to say that not one major decision was made regarding the new school, from its founding until his death, without Dr. Hatcher's approval; most decisions appear to have been carried out at his suggestion.

From the first commencement of 1899, when graduates were addressed by the distinguished Andrew Jackson Montague, then Attorney-General, later Governor, of Virginia, through the commencement of 1906, the Academy issued no diplomas. Students received either certificates of distinction or certificates of proficiency during these years, depending upon the total percentage grade they earned on all subjects taken in course. The class of 1907 in which eleven students graduated (seven boys and four girls), was the first Academy class to receive academic diplomas — a practice uninterrupted to the present day. Approximately 5,000 students have been awarded diplomas through the years.

In 1900 and 1902 Mr. and Mrs. William Pumphrey Snead of Fork Union presented two gifts of six and eleven acres of land respectively to the Academy for a campus. These seventeen acres are now the central segment of a much larger campus, and they form a most historic landholding because they were originally part of the old Seay wilderness plantation which Mrs. Snead (formerly Julia Moore Seay) had inherited. This land has never been sold since it was granted by King George II of England in 1745 to Abraham Seay II, Mrs. Snead's ancestor. Both Mr. and Mrs. Snead, original Guarantors

tors, were ever firm partisans of the Fork Union Academy.

Dr. Hatcher's powerful, magnetic personality and the strength of his determination kept the Academy alive in its early period of development. Always beset with financial problems and almost every other kind one could associate with the "growing pains" of a school, the Academy survived because Dr. Hatcher and his friends simply wouldn't give up, wouldn't let it die. The institution meant too much to its founders and was of too great a significance to the constituency it was designed to serve to allow so noble a project, so fine a dream, to expire.

Somehow the problems were always overcome — frequently at the eleventh hour and just as defeat seemed inevitable. Dr. Hatcher, nationally and internationally known as one of the really great and genuinely commanding figures of his day, was able to secure aid for his school from a myriad of sources where a lesser man, despite equal dedication, might have floundered in the effort. The enrollment grew from 19 students in 1898-1899 to 192 students in 1911-1912, the final year of Dr. Hatcher's presidency.

The Women's Department was discontinued by action of the Board of Trustees on May 18, 1909; however, the last women to graduate from the Academy did not do so until the commencement of 1912. This is true because women already matriculating in 1909, when the Trustees voted to make Fork Union exclusively a men's preparatory school, were allowed to complete their courses. Since 1912 women students at the Academy have been enrolled only as day students during summer sessions.

In the spring of 1902, and at the suggestion of Dr. George Holman Snead, the Board of Trustees established a Military Commission of five men (President of the Board of Trustees as Chairman, the Headmaster, and three other trustees and faculty members), and military instruction began during the 1902-1903 session with Major Leslie H. Walton as the first Commandant of Cadets.

Major Walton, a man of very diminutive stature and enormous love for people, was a Baptist minister. He knew, he said, absolutely nothing about military science and tactics. However, he went away to a special school and military camp



for a summer, came back, and organized and trained the first battalion, an Infantry Group of two companies, serving as its Commandant for two years. He was, a few survivors of that time indicate, a greatly beloved man who never had any disciplinary problems. Fork Union Academy was popularly, but unofficially, known after 1902 as "Fork Union Military Academy."

A long history of 71 years of military organization — 71 battalions of cadets — has proved to Academy authorities the many beneficial results to be derived of education within a military framework. A Junior Infantry Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit was instituted in January, 1919 with Lieutenant James H. McDonough as the first Professor of Military Science and Tactics under that program. In the spring of 1965 — 46 years later — the Academy dropped the R.O.T.C. Unit while Major Paul A. Roach, the last Professor of Military Science and Tactics, was in office. Since 1965, the Academy has developed and staffed its own military department.

### **The Post-Hatcher Years and Contemporary Times**

When Dr. Hatcher died very suddenly of a stroke of paralysis at the age of 78 in the late summer of 1912, the Academy and all those associated with it were shocked beyond measure — perhaps in the same sense that a family is numbed and rendered insecure upon the death of a father and breadwinner.

There were those who believed the school, a strictly private venture, could not continue without its founder, without his inexhaustible energies and charismatic leadership, and perhaps, without his host of friends who, it was observed, supported the Academy primarily because it was the pride and joy of the great Baptist evangelist they loved.

Dr. Hatcher's only living son, Dr. Eldridge Burwell Hatcher (1865-1943), immediately succeeded his father as President of the Board of Trustees and of the Academy, posts he was to occupy for two years until time permitted a replacement for the founder to be chosen and to be persuaded to accept the onerous responsibilities of the Academy's presidency.

Dr. E. B. Hatcher, an experienced Baptist minister like his father, already held a position in Baltimore as Superintendent of State Missions of the Baptist State Convention of Maryland, a demanding and stimulating task he had begun in 1903 and one to which he naturally felt a first obligation, contractually assumed as it was. He was forced to divide his time between the Academy's leadership and the functions of his office in Baltimore. This meant, of course, that he was frequently absent from the Fork Union scene.

There were financial difficulties and crises regarding the securing of teachers and a sufficiently reliable man for the headmastership; as a result, the Academy declined markedly. This was true despite valiant efforts by Dr. Hatcher, Captain Charles G. Snead and other Trustees, and indeed, practically the entire population of the village of Fork Union.

To administer the Academy during Dr. E. B. Hatcher's necessary absences to attend to his duties in Maryland, the Board of Trustees on September 20, 1912 appointed the following committee to work with Mr. Eric West Hardy, Headmaster: Walter Raleigh Daniel Moncure, Lewis Abrahams Tyree, and Elizabeth Herndon Hatcher (later Mrs. Henry Winn Sadler).

In September, 1914 a remarkable man, Colonel Clayton Edward Crosland (1886-1972) became President of the Academy. An Oxford University graduate (Wadham College), a Rhodes Scholar, and a fine educator and linguist, he did much in three short years to pump life into the comatose school.

Just a year before his arrival, Captain C. G. Snead, Dr. Eldridge Hatcher, and a host of friends had induced the Education Commission of the General Baptist Association of Virginia to accept Fork Union Military Academy as a gift to the Baptists of Virginia. This action took place at the Petersburg Convention of the Association in 1913. The Education Commission, of course, also accepted the financial responsibilities of the Academy and the challenge of operating it in future years. In the same year, on February 17, 1913, the Academy was incorporated under the laws of Virginia to become, legally, "Fork Union Military Academy."

With funds made available by the Baptists, Colonel Cros-

land personally designed and had built the beautiful Tudor-Gothic structure named Hatcher Hall in 1916 (ground was broken on May 16, 1916). This was Fork Union's first *permanent* building. He also designed the Academy's well-known official seal and motto, still in use today.

Colonel Crosland resigned in 1917, his ambitious revamping of the Academy's curriculum only just begun, to accept the presidency of Averett College in Danville, Virginia. He was succeeded by Colonel Nathaniel James Perkins (1877-1962), a native Fluvannian, loved and respected by everyone.

Colonel Perkins was president of the Academy from 1917 to 1930. After the disastrous fires of January, 1923 had destroyed two major wooden structures, he built a new Snead Hall and the Alumni Gymnasium to take the places of the old Snead Hall (erected 1900) and the Armory (erected 1902-04). He was preeminently an educator, and his influence caused a veritable renaissance in terms of the development of new course offerings, better techniques of instruction, and a more adequately prepared faculty.

Because of grave financial adversity during the decade of the 1920's, almost resulting in the closing of the Academy, and as a result of the need for an executive who could quickly and effectively raise necessary funds, Colonel Perkins voluntarily stepped down as president in 1930 so that Dr. John Jordan Wicker (1866-1958), an evangelist of great fame and seemingly a financial genius, could assume the presidency.

Colonel Perkins was named headmaster and remained in that position until his retirement in 1948. Everyone who knew Colonel Perkins describes him as a great and gallant gentleman, a courtly and courteous man, a fine educator. He represented Fluvanna and Goochland Counties from 1936 to 1941 in the House of Delegates of the General Assembly of Virginia. From 1950 to 1962 he was a member of the Virginia State Board of Welfare and Institutions.

Dr. Wicker's administration from 1930 to 1945 was a whirlwind of activity. He could and did extract money from the proverbial rockpile. He made the name "Fork Union Military Academy" known almost everywhere as he traveled and spoke before groups, Baptist and otherwise, throughout Virginia — and, indeed, throughout the South.

He established the Junior School in 1930, first of its type in the United States. He built Memorial Hall, Perkins Hall, the Social Center (now called the Music Building), "D" Barracks (destroyed by fire in April, 1953), a beautiful chapel which is named for him, the President's Residence, and the entire Junior School campus. He designed and constructed both the Upper and Junior School Circles. This is, very simply, a sampling of his contributions — there were many more. In essence, he gave financial stability and extraordinarily strong leadership when the Academy needed it most desperately.

In 1945 Dr. Wicker retired from the presidency of the Academy to be succeeded by his son, Colonel James Caldwell Wicker (1895-1973) whose tenure of 23 years ended with his retirement in 1968. Colonel Wicker, like his father, was a Baptist minister and a builder. Among other structures, he erected the Retan Library, the Thomas Gymnasium, the Academy-owned motel, and numerous faculty homes and apartment houses. He also erected a beautiful campus entrance arch and was responsible for extensive remodeling and landscaping.

In 1950 he introduced the One-Subject Plan of Instruction which is a unique method of concentrated study designed to discipline and train the minds of youth in the use of their own powers. He gave further financial stability to the Academy through wise investment policies regarding its endowment. He increased the combined enrollment of the Junior and Senior Schools to nearly 700 cadets, and enlarged and improved the faculty substantially. He "ran a tight ship", as the old cliché has it, was an intensely private person, and had a love for the Academy which cannot be successfully challenged. He was capable of enormous kindness to others, but he was not a man of informality nor a man with whom it was possible to debate issues.

In July, 1968, Fork Union's present leader — Colonel Kenneth Tyree Whitescarver (1920- ) — assumed the presidency of the Academy. He had been the president of his law firm, Whitescarver and Scaife of Fredericksburg, Virginia, at the time of his election to the presidency, and a gentleman of great personal charm, widely known in the State of Virginia. He had spent many years in the United States Marine Corps,

participated very actively in a number of Pacific Ocean campaigns against the Japanese in World War II, and attained the rank of lieutenant-colonel at the time of his retirement.

He is an efficient executive, a fine leader; he is friendly, helpful, interested in the welfare of all associated with Fork Union Military Academy. He has developed a genuine and well-balanced social program on the campus for the Corps of Cadets, and — somewhat miraculously it appears to those who have been long associated with Fork Union — he knows the cadets individually and well, is always available to them for counseling or exchange of views, and relates himself and his difficult office very, very well to the Fluvanna Community as well as to the Academy sub-community itself. His rapport with people of all ages and types is, nearly everyone agrees, his own special forte.

A new science complex, named the J. Caldwell Wicker Science Building — dedicated in 1970 — has been constructed during the five years of Colonel Whitescarver's administration, and a new Rifle Range is under construction as this is written. Great accomplishments are confidently expected of the Academy's current president as he writes upon the record book of his administration.

### **Distinguished Alumni; Biographical Extensions of Academy History**

Many thousands of students have attended Fork Union Military Academy during the seventy-five years of the institution's existence. At least 5,000, perhaps more, have received academic diplomas since they were first awarded in the spring of 1907. Exact figures probably are impossible because the fire which destroyed the Armory on January 17, 1923 also destroyed most of the student records then kept in the President's office in that building.

There are, of course, numerous and various criteria by which the success of a school may be judged; certainly one of them is an observation of its graduates in terms of worthy American citizenship and in terms of contributions made during mankind's unending trek across the sands of time. Inevitably, a man adds luster to his alma mater's name while

living a good life of service to his environment or while, in addition, he is outstandingly successful as he strides beyond the frontiers of the ordinary or the usual. Men's lives most obviously can add dimension to that somewhat amorphous complex called "cultural advance."

Fork Union Military Academy has graduated many, many men who have proved themselves to be distinguished human beings and who have greatly complimented the institution through the lives they have led; a substantial book would be necessary to do justice to them all. Realizing the inadequacy of the treatment given to the matter, this *Bulletin* nevertheless lists below, in the order of date of graduation, twenty-one great alumni as representative of all those who have loved and honored Fork Union Military Academy; at a time when so much is criticized by so many, it is a pleasure to emphasize a positive note in our dispensation.

The twenty-one Academy alumni, chosen as a random sampling, are: Brigadier-General Walter Putney Boatwright (1903), professional soldier in World Wars I and II and San Francisco business executive; Edward Hudson Lane (ca. 1906), founder and board chairman of Lane Company, Inc., of Altavista, Virginia; Grover Cleveland Outland (1906), educator, member of the Virginia House of Delegates, F.U.M.A. Trustee, insurance executive, and Norfolk civic leader; Colonel Aubrey Heyden Camden (1907), president and president-emeritus of Hargrave Military Academy; Dr. Francis Pendleton Gaines (1909), president and chancellor of Washington and Lee University; Dr. Joseph Leonard King (1909), renowned English professor at Denison and Samford Universities, and author; Major-General Herbert Ludwell Earnest (1914), professional soldier in World Wars I and II; Sergeant Earl Davis Gregory (1915), only Virginian to win the Congressional Medal of Honor in World War I; Harold Roe Bartle (1920), Mayor and Mayor-Emeritus of Kansas City, Missouri; Colonel Joseph Hathaway Cosby (1921), president and president-emeritus of Hargrave Military Academy; Colonel Charles Graham Thomas (1921), director of athletics, assistant to the president, and executive secretary of the Alumni Association, Fork Union Military Academy; and Colonel Harry Morton Waldron (1922), head-

master and headmaster-emeritus, Fork Union Military Academy.

We might also list Judge Jesse W. Dillon (1923), chairman, Virginia State Corporation Commission and commissioner for aviation; Garland Edward Moss (1923), Mayor of Chase City, Virginia, member of the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, and impresario, South Central Fair of Virginia, for 28 years; Rear-Admiral William Beckwith Perkins (1927), professional Navy officer; Otto Nelson Whittaker (1935), journalist and author, of Roanoke, Virginia; Honorable Joel T. Broyhill (1939), member, U.S. House of Representatives from the Tenth District of Virginia; Honorable Ike F. Andrews (1942), member, U.S. House of Representatives from the Fourth District of North Carolina; Major-General William John McCaddin (1947), Adjutant-General of Virginia; Reverend Charles Grantland Fuller (1949), pastor of the First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Virginia, and author, distinguished for his impressive radio and television ministry and speaking engagements throughout the world; and Albert D. Kinnett (1949), musician, poet, and Shakespearean actor of note.

If, as Longfellow once wrote, "Lives of great men all remind us that we can make our lives sublime," it would appear that Fork Union Military Academy cadets of this day, examining the records of Academy graduates from past years, should be stimulated to strive for the genuine advancement that is a measurable contribution to man, each at his own capacity and to his own times.

Fork Union, Virginia  
July 16, 1973

Major Lynwood H. Halliburton  
Instructor in English  
Academic Counselor  
Academy Historian  
Fork Union Military Academy

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Taylor, G. B., *Virginia Baptist Ministers, Fifth Series*.

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These lines are dedicated, with affection, to all graduates of  
Fork Union Military Academy, past and future:

### **A FORK UNION REVERIE**

I shall always remember . . . . .

The beauty of Fork Union Military Academy:

Stately buildings in Tudor-Gothic majesty -  
gleaming in the sun, glistening in the rain -  
Precisely embracing twin circles of delight;  
Engaging vistas, arboreal abundance,  
From Entrance Arch to Hatcher's broad facade.

I shall always remember . . . . .

The quest for excellence at Fork Union Military Academy:

Teaching and learning, interdependent challenges  
In the search for Truth, involving all,  
Meaningful existence in a turbulent time,  
Weaving extra-dimensional patterns on history's ancient  
loom.

I shall always remember . . . . .

The spiritual values of Fork Union Military Academy:

Wicker Chapel, cruciform prayer in stained-glass and  
stone,  
Ministering heart for a world in microcosm;  
Immortal flowers growing — altruistic thoughts —  
Planted in youth, future leaders of the Land.

I shall always remember . . . . .

The sounds of Fork Union Military Academy:

Commanding voices, marching feet, orderliness unique  
elsewhere,  
Reveille and Retreat, Totto and Taps —  
bittersweet echoes haunting the air;  
Commencement's solemnity — past and present juxtaposed;  
Poignant sounds — history eternally disclosed.

— L. H. Halliburton

## FLUVANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS — 1973-1974

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*First Vice-President:* Mr. R. A. Murdock

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*Recording Secretary:* Mrs. Edwin O. Gooch

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## NEW MEMBERS — FALL 1973

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Mr. and Mrs. Edward M. Butler .....	Philadelphia, Pa.
Mrs. Elizabeth Butler .....	Scottsville, Va.
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 Miss Virginia Talley ..... Palmyra, Va.  
 Mr. Robert Bascum Thomas ..... Farmville, Va.

**Life Member**

Mrs. Sally W. Grant ..... Richmond, Va.

The Fluvanna Historical Society was founded in 1964 to collect and preserve manuscripts and other documents relating to the history of Fluvanna County in Virginia; to maintain the Old Stone Jail at the county seat, Palmyra, as a museum where antiquities of the county may be exhibited; and to encourage historical research.

Meetings of the Society are held three times a year. Annual dues are \$2.00; a life membership costs \$50.00. A bulletin is published twice a year, distributed to members free of charge. Copies can be purchased for \$2.00 single copy; \$3.00 double copy. Readers are requested to contribute any information of historical interest they may have or may be able to obtain. The society will endeavor to publish as much of this information as may be possible.

All communications should be addressed to: Mrs. Henry C. McGehee, Chairman of Publications, Fluvanna County Historical Society, Box 132, Palmyra, Virginia.



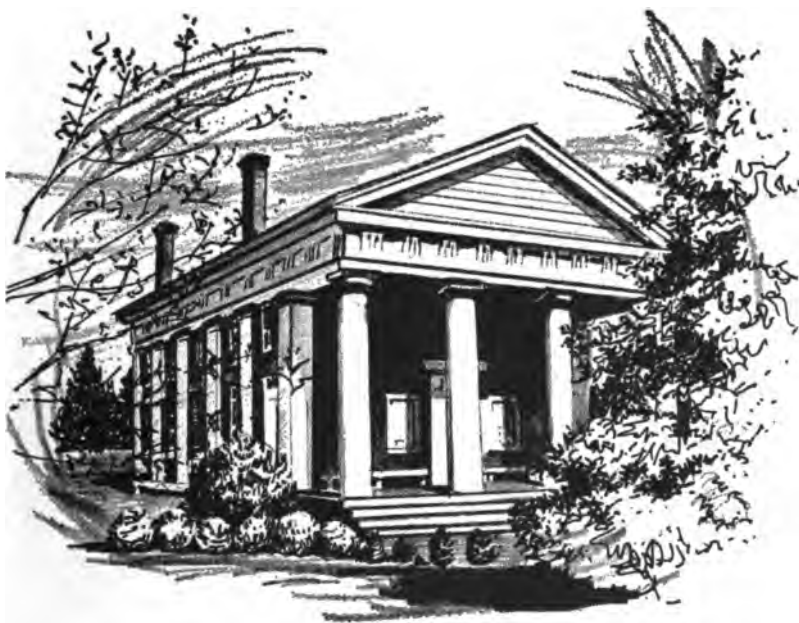
*The Bulletin of the*  
**FLUVANNA COUNTY**  
**Historical Society**

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**Number 18**

**April 1974**

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**COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA**

*Built in 1830*

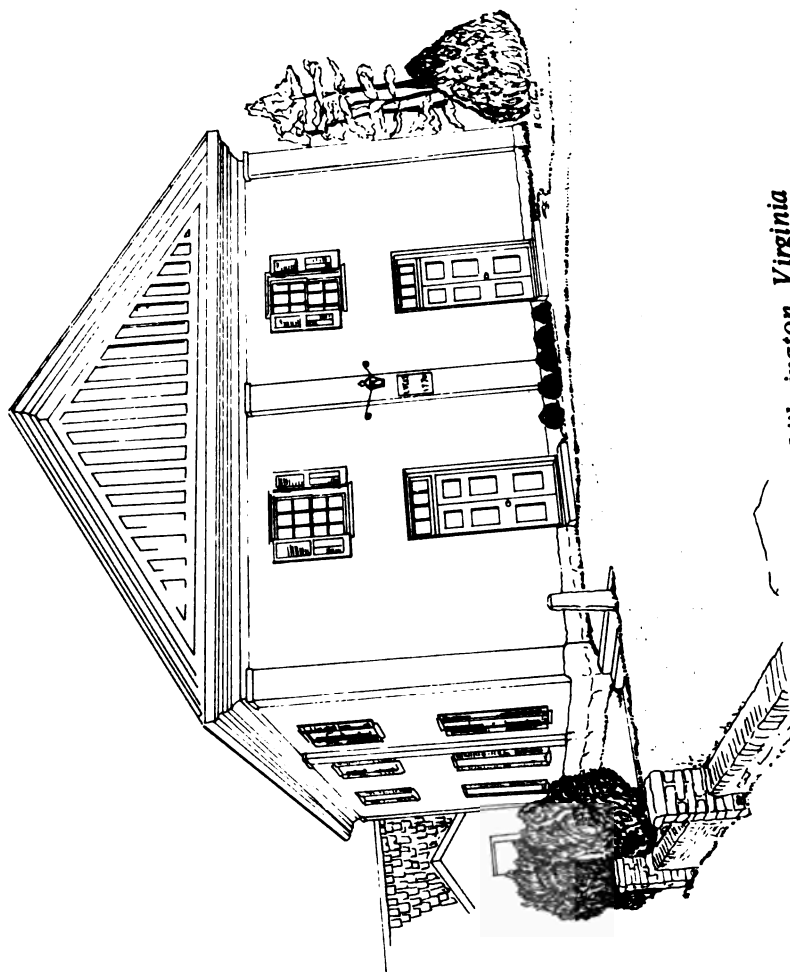


## **SONS OF LYLES**

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*Lyles Baptist Church, Wilmington, Virginia*

# **SONS OF LYLES**

## **I**

### **LYLES BAPTIST CHURCH**

**“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with  
so great a cloud of witness. . .” — Hebrews 12:1  
(From Text of Dr. Melton at Homecoming at Lyles)**

Few rural Baptist churches have a more interesting history than that of Lyles Baptist Church at Wilmington. In this year of 1974, Fluvanna pauses to honor Lyles as it celebrates its 200th anniversary, and to recognize the faithful who have cherished its aims and traditions.

A mental picture of Lyles comes to mind: Warm sunlight lovingly caresses the old brick walls; tall straight pines hold their crowns of green needles against a blue sky; ancient oaks spread their shade; and white stone markers stand at attention on the nearby grassy slope.

The heritage of a great past is felt within the walls of this old church, but it is not the building that tells the story of Lyles. It is the lives of the men and women who have worked for Lyles, worshipped there, preached there, taught there — loyal, hard-working, strong-willed, resourceful and kindhearted.

Lyles is the “mother church” of the Baptists of Fluvanna, for its members formed many branches of Lyles which in time became independent congregations: Bybee, Fork Union, Columbia, Beulah, Evergreen and Byrd Grove. Two were formed in Goochland, Mt. Gilead and Mt. Prospect.

In its first century four strong ministers and four loyal clerks served Lyles. The four clerks were Benjamin Lee, Benjamin Bowles, John Johnson, S.W., and John S. Kent. The first four ministers were Philip Webber, William Baskett, Robert Lilly and Peter C. Hoge. Much could be said about the diligence and dedication of these faithful stewards.

Other ministers who served Lyles became distinguished leaders of the Baptist denomination: Dr. A. E. Dickinson, Rev. James T. Dickinson, Dr. John William Jones, Rev. R. B. Boatwright, Rev. E. P. Scott, Dr. Sparks W. Melton.

Lyles has never lacked for loyal and faithful members, and the church shaped the lives of many inspiring educators who

in turn spent their lives teaching the youth of Fluvanna and helping them acquire higher education. We only mention three: Dr. R. E. Loving, and Misses Annie and Bettie Cleveland. There have been many more whose selfless endeavors helped to mold Fluvanna. This emphasis on education is evidenced by Lyles' Sunday School program, active as early as 1835, and by the Bowles-White Scholarship which Lyles may award to deserving students attending the University of Richmond. In 1847 the church permitted the neighborhood to build a school on the northwest corner of the church grounds.

In searching records for "Sons of Lyles" who dedicated their lives to Christian service we found the names of Isaac Luckadoo, Robert Lilly, James M. Kent, J. K. Pace, William S. Kent, William H. Ryals, Dr. J. W. Loving, Dr. Sparks W. Melton, Dr. Thomas H. Perkins, Dr. W. Mosby Seay and Philip H. Tomlinson.

Two young men who studied and worshipped at Lyles in their early years are David Meade Bercaw, who entered the ministry, and Richard Edward Loving, who has served many years as a missionary of the Wycliff Bible Society in New Guinea.

Our great poet, Henry W. Longfellow, reminds us in his "Psalm of Life" that all great and commendable people leave behind them constructive footprints that direct those who would seek to follow into avenues of greater service to mankind. The founders of Lyles, 200 years ago, by their sacrificial and dedicated labors, brought this church into existence, and dedicated members through the succeeding years have held high the banner of the Cross and kept alive the religious commitments of our forefathers.

All of these who have gone before come under the designation, by Apostle Paul, of "clouds of witnesses," whose services we should very properly seek to emulate. This passage by Paul continues: "... let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

-- Burwell W. Seay IV

\* \* \* \* \*

A comprehensive new history of Lyles has been prepared by Major Paul Thompson of Fork Union Military Academy. To share in the bicentennial celebration and to honor Lyles Baptist Church, the Fluvanna County Historical Society here publishes two speeches and biographical sketches of three "Sons of Lyles:" Dr. Sparks W. Melton, Dr. R. E. Loving, and Dr. W. Mosby Seay. We are grateful to those who made the material available to us.

## II DR. SPARKS WHITE MELTON

I think it can be truthfully said he came near to realizing the best hopes and ambitions of his kin and friends. Even in his youth, the people heard him gladly. — Dr. R. E. Loving, 175th Anniversary of Lyles, July 31, 1949.

Sparks White Melton was born at home near Wilmington on the old Post, or Stagecoach, Road on March 3, 1870, five years after the surrender at Appomattox and 36 years after Lafayette had rumbled up the Road in General Cocke's coach on his triumphal tour.

Sparks was the younger son of Dr. John Tisdale Melton; his brother, Horace Tisdale, was born in 1867. Sparks' grandfather, Elisha Melton, helped to engineer construction of the Virginia Central Railroad and gave land for the town of Louisa.

John Tisdale Melton studied medicine at the Jefferson College of Medicine in Philadelphia. He practiced in Missouri, but returned to Virginia to enlist as a surgeon in the Confederacy. After the war, he married Ann Virginia White, and came to practice medicine in Fluvanna and to make his home with Virginia's people near Wilmington. His wife was the daughter of Pleasant White and granddaughter of Elder Elijah H. Sparks, well-known Methodist preacher.

Dr. Melton's medical saddle bags, which he carried during the war, and his pistol, which he never fired against the enemy, have been given by his descendants to The Old Stone Jail Museum. The war years shortened the life of this faithful "beloved physician," and he died March 21, 1881.

To help support and educate her two sons, Mrs. Melton took in summer boarders and taught school. A woman of intelligence, faith and determination, she held family daily devotions and taught a Sunday School class at Lyles each Sunday. She even found time, in 1882, to start a branch Sunday School at the Red Hill Schoolhouse, which had been built at her expense. (In 1898, she married Mr. Thomas H. Shepherd, Superintendent of Fluvanna County Schools.)

The first son, Horace, studied medicine at the University of Maryland, and like his father before him, practiced medicine in Fluvanna until his death in 1896.

Sparks Melton attended classes taught by his mother, and was a member of the first graduating class in the newly accredited high school at the county seat. At the age of 15 he joined Lyles Church and the young pastor, J. R. Dickinson, baptized him. There were no funds for higher education, so he found employment in Richmond and entered Smithdeal Business College in 1888. Finding this school did not meet his needs, he continued to work and entered Richmond College in September, 1889.

As early as July, 1889, Sparks answered a call to the ministry. Since Lyles was without a pastor that summer, he accepted an opportunity to preach there. In April, 1891, the pastor of Lyles resigned and the church called upon its young student to preach at regular meetings on third Sundays. Forks of Willis Church soon called him for second Sundays, and when Cartersville Church called him for first and fourth Sundays, he had four regular appointments each month.

Lyles Church sought its pastor's ordination, and Sparks Melton was ordained there in his home church April 19, 1892. However, he knew that if he attended seminary, he must leave his beloved Lyles. After three years at Richmond College, he transferred in the fall of 1892 to Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. He graduated on June 5, 1895 at the head of his class and received the coveted prize for oratory.

One wonders how he was able to concentrate on his studies so successfully, for in the summer of 1894 a young lady at a revival caught his eye, and subsequently, his heart. She was Laura Virginia Nelson, daughter of the President of the Richmond Womans' College, who was in Fluvanna to visit relatives. They were married April 28, 1895, just before his graduation.

The young minister was honored with calls to churches in New York, Florida and Baltimore. He chose the Franklin Square Church in Baltimore. After five years there he accepted a call to the First Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia. He began his work there April 22, 1900, a memorable day for "the young and handsome pastor," but a more important

event occurred in Richmond on October 8, 1901 when his son, James Carroll Melton, was born.

Dr. Melton could have remained in Augusta for a lifetime, for his people loved him and treasured his ministry, and he held an eminent position in the affairs of the city. But he chose Freemason Street Baptist Church in Norfolk for his "lifetime ministry," declining, through the years, countless invitations from many prominent churches.

*The Virginian Pilot* noted his arrival on December 3, 1908 and proclaimed "His widespread reputation as an able preacher and pulpit orator will doubtless attract large congregations to hear him." The prophesy was fulfilled and people from all walks of life flocked to hear "Norfolk's pastor" for the next 44 years.

Two great sorrows came to him during the first half of that ministry. His beloved wife died in 1918 and his devoted mother ten years later.

Always faithful in his attendance at Baptist Convention Associations, he was elected President of the Baptist General Association in 1931. Another honor came the same year which pleased him greatly: He became the grandfather of J. Carroll Melton II.

Dr. Melton used but few gestures and fewer notes in the pulpit, but his unusual voice and careful selection of words gave his sermons presence and drama. He was striking in physical appearance and bearing. Personal gifts and integrity were the marks of the man; simplicity and conviction were the marks of his preaching.

His delivery was even, clear and definite. He spoke with such smoothness and confidence that you felt he had surely memorized every word. His greatest gift was his ability to paint with words such clear pictures of scenes and action that he left an unforgettable impression upon listeners.

He was a man of dignity, but he was approachable and seemed never in a hurry. Though he did not use lengthy descriptions or tell jokes from the pulpit, he dearly loved to tell a good story when an occasion arose. He was full of cryptic sayings and retorts, swap-stories, recollections of comical happenings, and dialect tales.

A majestic mien, a regal bearing, a noble face, a superior mind, a clarion voice and a tender, understanding heart. — Dr. Solon B. Cousins

Dr. Melton submitted his resignation to Freemason in 1934 to return to the peace and quiet of Fluvanna, but this decision caused such a furor that he relented and agreed to stay. For the next 20 years he continued to offer his resignation, but it was not accepted. In 1939 he realized a long-cherished dream when he built a rustic log cabin on Rt. 608 at the site of his old home which became both "home" and retreat.

After his retirement in July, 1952 at the age of 82, he divided his time between Norfolk and Fluvanna. His last sermon preached to the Freemason Street Church, March 1, 1954 was based on the text, "I have kept the faith." He died one month later, and as he wished, was buried in the family cemetery near his Wilmington home, which he had declared was "the center of the universe; the treetops meet the sky in every direction."

During his long ministry, honors, awards and grateful recognition poured from every side. He travelled continuously for he was always in great demand as preacher and public speaker. Despite the demands on his time, he returned to Fluvanna often for revivals, for homecomings and anniversaries, for important occasions — and just to rest. The home folk never missed a chance to hear him and there was always a large crowd to hear this famous man, for he was theirs; and he returned the compliment by his constant references to his home county, "Old Flu."

He preached the baccalaureate sermon for the first class to graduate from the new Fluvanna County High School, May 26, 1935 with the theme "We don't know where we're going, but we are on our way." When he returned for the 1942 baccalaureate, his topic was "The Gift of a Day."

He returned again and again, for he had dedicated "his school" on September 14, 1934. It is this speech which we have chosen to print, for even now, 40 years later, we can still hear his voice — electrifying, inspiring, and furnishing guidance to yet another generation.

x x x x x

There are many who remember how proud Fluvanna County was of its first consolidated high school, built during the Great Depression. At the time it was one of the finest rural high schools in the state, one of the first consolidated schools, and one of the first rural high schools to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It is an appropriate time to remember, for plans are now being drawn to build a new Fluvanna Senior High School.

\* \* \* \* \*

### III DEDICATED TO THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

There are those who hold that the man of the future will be a composite man; that is, there will be found centered in him all the best elements of the fairest types of all the races, each race making its contribution, its highest and its best.

I do not know that this prophesy shall ever be fulfilled, but this I do know to be true: that as individuals and nations we are indebted to the past for rich legacies which have become a part of our life and civilization. Man dies, but in a sense he lives on. At some point, and in some way, he has touched another life, and given, in that touch, direction and momentum; at some time he has set in motion the stream of heredity which flows on — death cannot stop it; another birth cannot eliminate it. On it goes through another life, and then another, and thus becomes many men.

Any age of the world's history, then, is to a large extent the product of what has gone before. Civilization, like the growth and beauty of a flower, is a process of unfolding; or, if you prefer the phrase, the result of the operation of the principles of evolution. The flower today is more beautiful than it was on yesterday, but the rain and the sunshine and the work of yesterday have contributed to the glory of today.

So it is that the occasion which brings us together, invites us to retrospection. "Central High School!" Ah, well do we recall that school [in Palmyra]. I am informed it was the first



rural high school to be established in the state. What illustrious names suggest themselves to us! Judge James O. Shepherd in whose mind the project was born and whose dream today finds glorious fulfillment. It was an humble building, but no pent up Utica — dedicated to the good of Fluvanna youth by big hearts and brains. There was that noble spirit, Thomas H. Haden, a peerless teacher, who, like Arnold of Rugby, poured his personality into the lives and hearts of his pupils and teachers. Ably was he assisted by those women, Miss Rosa Shepherd, Miss Rebecca B. Cleveland, Miss Bettie Cleveland and others, who brought to their work culture of mind and heart, and wrought for themselves a glorious immortality. Ah! those were days, never to be forgotten by many of us, who have outlived the passing decades, for there we were formed. By faith those noble ones projected themselves into generations yet unborn.

But we must not become a modern Old Mortality, lingering among the memories of the past. The present, thrilling and prophetic, calls to us. The dream of James O. Shepherd did not vanish into thin air. It became a part of the dreams and hopes of other noble spirits who followed him. Charles E. Jones, whose interests and generous spirit led him to donate the land upon which this stately building has been erected, was one of them.

Then the thought gripped with new power the heart and mind of the present efficient superintendent, quietly and persistently, until at last the dream took concrete form; and today, it seems that a divine intelligence and a smiling providence, have been moving in perfect harmony with human prowess and culture.

And so it comes to pass that here, the Superintendent, and Board, and the devoted people of this county, are proud to feel that they can offer this institution to the state and even the nation, as a contribution to the work of preparing young men and women to play better their part in the great drama of life. It stands as a credit to the county, to its faith in its boys and girls, to the fact that whatever comes, there shall not be denied to our youth the great privileges of life. The congratulations of the entire state are due to the Board and the people of the county.

But there comes here, as to all individuals and undertakings, the temptation to pause with a consideration of our achievements of the present. This admonishes us to ask the question as to the

### Challenge of the Hour.

What is the challenge as we behold the work of our hands? In other words, what is the challenge of victory? No man, no institution, no college, no school, has any right to exist that does not make some distinct contribution to life; to the sum total of human good and human happiness. Indeed, in this we may purchase our right to exist and our claim to immortality.

What, then, is the challenge, as we turn our faces from the past to the future? What are the voices that call to us out of the tomorrows of life — in this day of economical confusion, of social equality, of religious questioning? The challenge to you, my friends, presented in this magnificent building is the

### Pursuit of Truth.

Nothing less than this makes us worthy of our inheritance from the past, and our present achievement. Truth is a religious thing. It is sacred, whether found by the chemist in his laboratory, or the scholar in his study, or the astronomer in the heavens, or the geologist in the earth; whether sung by the spheres above us, or written in the rocks beneath us, truth is of God and is sacred.

The man who seeks truth, whatever the sphere in which he moves, is engaged in a religious exercise. Truth is worthy of the best effort and the supremest sacrifice; it is eternal. It cannot be legislated, nor reasoned, nor criticised out of the world. Chains cannot bind it; prisons cannot confine it; flames cannot consume it. It has had its dark days, its cruel mockings, its scourgings.

It has been stoned; it has been sawn asunder; it has been slain with the sword. It has wandered about in sheep skins and in goat skins, being destitute and afflicted; tormented. It has wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and in caves of the earth. But it has subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions; even quenched the violence of fire and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

This, my friends, is the challenge of the hour, as we turn our faces to the future. This school can have no higher goal nor receive a more challenging appeal, than to dedicate this building to the quest of truth wherever it may be found.

Today, if I were permitted to write over the gateway leading up to this building one sentence, I think it would read thus:

"The gate to the pathway that leads to the kingdom of truth."

Truth in its broadest sense. Whatever may be the changes that shall come to us, we know not. It is the age of guessing. But we do know, whatever these changes may be, that great spiritual verities will remain; they have through the centuries. And there will always be a place for the trained mind and the courageous heart; there will always be battles which only these can win; there will be heights which only these can scale; always be tasks which only these can discharge. To help these boys and girls to fit into the life and the tasks of the future is the pledge of this institution. For after all, it is only that man who is fully equipped for the task to come who can go forth saying,

He's true to God who's true to man,  
Wherever wrong is done to the weakest and the humblest,

'Neath the all beholding sun,  
That wrong is also done to us;  
And they are slaves most base,  
Whose love of right is for themselves,  
And not for all the race.

Today we wish for each boy and girl who enters this institution, that in the quest for truth each may come to the end of the journey feeling,

I love the Lord, I love my fellow men,  
Christ the gentle I adore;  
And my soul's lowest whisper moves me more,  
Than hell or fear or dogma can.  
What church then or creed shall hinder me,  
What power presumptuous place me under band,  
With love for God and love for man,  
And eager eyes for Christ of Galilee?

## IV THE SAGE OF FLUVANNA

“And gladly would he learn and gladly teach.” — Chaucer

It is not often that a man becomes a legend in his own lifetime. That happened to Dr. Robert Edward Loving, due in a large part to a down-to-earth quality and a contempt for sham and pretension. He earned his title, “Sage of Fluvanna,” during the forty years he taught the wonders of physics (and Fluvanna) at the University of Richmond.

After he retired from teaching in 1948, “Doc” Loving still remained on the campus to be near the atmosphere he loved. His wife, the former Lena M. Fraser, had died in 1951, and he would have been lonely had he denied himself proximity to the familiar bustle of campus life. He continued to be a very active member of the college community, a much honored professor emeritus, until a short while before his death in 1960. His will disclosed that Dr. Loving left to the University of Richmond a bequest of \$150,000. This was a larger sum than his total salary received from the University during 40 years on the faculty as Professor of Physics.

Dr. Loving was born in the home, still standing, on Granite Hill Farm in Fluvanna on April 20, 1874, the youngest son of Richard Eli and Sally Baker Loving. After completing his early education in Fluvanna, he attended Glade Spring Military Academy where one of his brothers was teaching. He graduated after one year with first honors and a scholarship to Richmond College. A brilliant student, he won both the Crump prize in mathematics and the Tanner Medal in Greek at Richmond.

He completed work for the B.A. degree in 1896 and accepted a professorship at Richmond Woman's College to continue his studies to earn his M.A. degree from Richmond in 1898. Dr. Loving entered Johns Hopkins University on a scholarship which was renewed annually until he received his Ph.D. in 1905. While there he accepted appointment as assistant lecturer and fellow in physics.

Leaving Johns Hopkins, he taught at Cornell and the University of Missouri before returning to join the faculty of Richmond College in the fall of 1908. On leaves of absence in

1919-20 and 1927-28, Dr. Loving returned to Cornell University, and during the summer of 1920 he served as head of the department of Physics at the University of Virginia. In the summer of 1917 he worked as assistant physicist for the United States Bureau of Standards.

All his students long remembered the classroom rituals of this beloved professor who would direct a question to a member of the class in a voice that was high with a whine, and promptly instruct that student to "say yassuh!" No logic, of course, could sustain the practice of asking a question and then immediately directing the answer — except the logic of a wise teacher who knew that the occasional injection of a bit of idiosyncrasy adds color and interest to the proceedings that could become tedious.

One of his pupils wrote a description of Dr. Loving for a publication of the University of Richmond:<sup>1</sup>

The appearance of the professor is interesting and amusing in itself. Silky white hair which stands almost straight up covers his head. His face is considerably wrinkled, but its features give him the appearance of being younger than he is. Around the waist he has a rather broad outlook on life. He is the first man I have ever seen who exemplifies the saying, "When he laughed, his belly shook like a bowl full of jelly." His black bow tie, white shirt, and wide suspenders add more to his character.

He always demonstrated an experiment as though he had never done it before and was not at all sure it would work. After appreciative laughter died down, he would throw his head back and close his eyes and explain the principle: "Now Solomon knows; Solomon's cousin knows. . ." Or he would answer a question: "Doctor Carter, you is from Fluvanna County, and you don't know why that works? Doggone! I don't expect these city folks to understand that, but you should."

<sup>1</sup>We appreciate permission from the University of Richmond to use information published on Dr. Loving, but we failed in attempts to identify the student author or the publication which carried this article about Dr. Loving.

To continue quoting a student:

Somewhere between September and Christmas a germ of understanding is born. This man who stands before us, eyes closed and hand raised as if reaching for a particular word, and finally coining his own, is not the old eccentric professor we thought him to be. He is a man young in mind who, through his accent, mannerisms, and human approach, has made a difficult course interesting and real.

“ . . . Look here, Dr. X, Dr. Y, Dr. Anybody, I am not interested in your thoughts but in your thinks. . . If I can get you to think in a logical and concise fashion so that other men can understand you, I will be satisfied.

It was Dr. Loving who organized the first scholarship fraternity at Richmond College which was active until the Epsilon Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was organized. As the secretary for so many years, he became the personification of Phi Beta Kappa at Richmond.

He taught a Sunday School class of boys and served as deacon of Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond. He was very active in the affairs of the Baptist General Association and served as its President.

All his adult life he served ex-officio and without compensation as secretary of his “Fluvanna County Chamber of Commerce,” making sure that each student who passed physics understood that Fluvanna was the queen of all Virginia’s subdivisions. In his youth Dr. Loving attended Lyles Church; all his life he returned often to worship at the old church; and here he is buried.

Perhaps it is not in Dr. Loving’s career accomplishments that we will find our greatest appreciation of the man, but rather in his indomitable spirit and sensible relationships with others. His simply expressed wisdom and stability of will handed down for our review today are timely indeed, and as freshly instructive as one of his finest lectures.

We publish here excerpts from an informal speech he made from the steps of the Courthouse June 8, 1957 during the Fluvanna Festival celebrating the 350th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement and the 180th anniversary of the formation of Fluvanna County.

## V FLUVANNA IN OTHER YEARS

Fluvanna County — 282 square miles, or 180,000 acres — was formed from Albemarle County in 1777. It was named for the Fluvanna River, the early name given the James River west of Columbia. The present population is in round numbers 7000. It is thus not a large county; but if we may adapt a sentence from Daniel Webster in his famous Dartmouth College plea before the U.S. Supreme Court with John Marshall presiding, we can say, "It is a small county, but there are those who love it."

Here I was born. I arrived there in 1874, the last of six children. The next older, a sister, was eight; the oldest, a brother, was seventeen. I must have been a sort of toy or plaything for the other children, right much of a pet too.

My earliest recollection dates back eighty years, when I was three years old. Mother left me away from home a few days that I might forget what most modern babies never learn. The following year I had another experience which present-day boys never know. All children used to wear dresses until they were about four years old. I remember watching Mother make my first pants, and how impatient I was for the day when I could wear them and let everybody know I was not a girl. I genuinely pity the little fellows who never get the thrill of *putting on pants*.

When I was six years old, my father came to the house one April morning and found me in a heated argument with Mother about a sweet potato, left over when someone put down the hot bed for raising potato slips. After Mother had stated the case, my father took me up with one hand and laid me across his knee. With his heavy right hand, he gave me my first and only physical punishment for misconduct. I do not recall that it hurt 'specially, but it scared me out of my wits, so that I do not remember at all what became of the sweet potato Mother had roasted for me.

My father's health declined through that spring; by late June he was confined to his bed. Dr. John T. Melton, father of Dr. Sparks [Melton], attended him. Evidently word of the seriousness of his trouble spread around the neighborhood.

Three of his neighbors consulted with each other, came to see him and had a talk with mother, indicating their feeling that my twenty-year old brother was too inexperienced to have responsibility for nursing one so ill as my father was. It was agreed among the three that they would divide the time to fit the business of each so that one could be with my father continuously. Professional nurses could not be had; doctors in Richmond did not perform exploratory operations to determine the nature or degree of internal ailments — it was fifteen years before X-rays were discovered. These gentlemen cared for my father as a kindly service, without a thought of any charge. They were neighbors like the Good Samaritan.

My father's funeral was held in August, 1881, a year after his burial, as the custom of the day required. I happened to notice that Aunt Ellen was doing a lot of cooking on a Saturday, so I asked her about it. She said, "Don't you know they is gwine ter have your daddy's funeral tomorrow?"

The family was expected to provide dinner for all friends and relatives from outside the immediate neighborhood. In early times there was great rivalry in funeral dinners, so that a family might spend the whole of the estate in buying food and drink for the funeral, until some wiser ones put into their wills a limit on the amount that could be so expended. Freeman's *Washington* cites such a case.

I started to school in the fall of 1880 when I was six years old. I walked two and a half miles with my brother, the teacher, who was to receive \$20 per month for five months, provided he made an average of 20 pupils per day. At supper after my first day, some one of the family asked how I liked school. I replied that I did not like it at all and was not going any more. A glance from Mother or some sort of signal changed the subject.

Next morning I saw she was fixing lunches for two and was just about to tell her I did not need one, when she looked at me and said, "Johnny needs you to count on the attendance; I am going to give you a cent a day to go to school." A sister broke in with an exclamation about earning a whole dollar in the session. I forgot my objections, soon had the lunches, and trotted off to overtake my brother. I went to school happily ever afterward: i.e. for the next 25 years.



It was about this time that I made my first long trip from home, seven miles to Palmyra in the oxcart with Uncle Jack Rolin to take a load of wheat to the mill. We started long before daybreak. Uncle Jack did not count time in hours; he had no watch nor clock. We got home with the flour in time for supper.

I remembered the jail, but the big attraction for me was the mill. The machinery was as impressive to me then as was the Ford Motor Plant in Detroit when I visited it some fifteen years ago.

I did not get to Palmyra again until I had come to the period in a boy's life when he has intermittent heart disturbances. Judge James O. Shepherd, Superintendent of Schools for the County, had set up at Palmyra what was said to be the first fully accredited rural high school in Virginia. A friend of mine had a part in the Commencement Program. She sang what was to me a new song, "Annie Rooney." The words were so precisely what I had been wanting to say to her that they made an indelible impression on my memory. After nearly seventy years, I think I can give a verse:

She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau;  
She's my Annie, I'm her Joe.  
Soon we'll marry, never to part;  
Little Annie Rooney is my sweetheart.

My friend soon married and went to Alabama; I did not need either hospitalization or a psychiatrist; Father Time cured my ailment, and his medicine is still effective for people who have a little patience. It is not so quick in action as the pills advertised on the radio every day, but it is safer and there is no charge.

In my seventh year it was thought safe for me to walk to the Post Office at Wilmington for the mail that came three times a week. Mother had a son away at college then; the mail was important to her. If the chinquapins along the road were not ripe and so didn't delay me, I often had time to stand on the store porch and listen to a group of elderly gentlemen talk, while waiting for the mail.

The mail man had a definite time for leaving Columbia, but if the roads were muddy or the weather very hot, the horses

could not keep his schedule, so there was much time to talk about the weather, the crops, politics, the neighbors, etc. These men smoked or chewed tobacco — some smoked and chewed. If one spat on my bare toes, he would salve my feelings with a penny to get a striped stick of peppermint candy. From these men I learned a good deal about who was who in the neighborhood. They seemed to know everybody; they had plenty of time to talk, for they had not needed to work before 1865 and had not learned how afterwards.

To return to my schooling, the boys at that free school cut and carried the wood and looked after the fire in the stove. Someone brought a bucket of water each morning from a spring not far down in the woods. We all drank from the one tin dipper; we had no epidemics that winter. I think we must have been born with a better supply of antibodies in those days.

After the year of "free school," I spent three years under a lady teacher then called a Governess, whom mother employed for my sisters and a few young ladies of the neighborhood. I then entered the private school of Mr. James McClellan Miller on his farm that adjoined my old home. He had boys from Elk Island, Columbia, Kents Store, Palmyra, Carysbrook and homes nearer by, also a few boarders from Charlottesville and Richmond.

An ante-bellum graduate of the University of Virginia, Mr. Miller was noted as a disciplinarian, kept a good switch close at hand, and promptly replaced a worn out one. Walter Agee and Walter Cosby rode from Elk Island and Columbia; Channing and Earl Snead walked from White Rock down to East Point, rowed across the Rivanna and walked on again, usually arriving on time. Oney Gooch walked from Kents Store. We had legs in those days.

The school room was of logs, about 20 by 24 feet, and had been a slave quarter. There was a sort of counter or built-in desk on two sides of the room. The benches were without backs, of heavy slab plank, flat side up, undressed. You can imagine what happened to the seats of boys' pants when they wriggled on those rough boards from 9 to 12 and from 1 to 4 o'clock. The first class in the morning was spelling, a page from a small dictionary, all standing and participating, with

“cutting down” for missing a word, going to the foot for absence.

Our amusements were few and simple; still time was not heavy on our hands. One day just after Christmas, I was shooting some little red popcrackers, when a big boy demanded that I give him one. He stuffed it in his pants pocket and went into the school room. He had hardly sat down when the thing went off. I explained that I thought he knew it was lighted, so he did not give me a “licking.” Our chief amusement, weather permitting, was a sort of baseball. The pitcher and batter were on the same side. Two of the older boys chose up; it did not matter how many were on a side. We changed when three were out. A boy was out if he missed three tries at hitting the ball, or if someone on the other team caught a batted ball on the first hop, or if he was tagged between bases. We had no mitts, and did not dare to catch the heavy rubber ball on the fly.

It never occurred to me that I ought to ride to school or be taken by anyone. The only aid to my transportation was that about every two years, my brother would cut a tree on the bank of a small creek, letting it fall across the stream for a foot pole. Here is a thing I never heard in my boyhood: no one ever found fault with the teacher. I can’t imagine what Mr. Miller would have done if a mother had come to see him about Johnny’s grades or a whipping he had received. Some teachers today are less well trained than was Mr. Miller; still I am sure that parents do their children a great disservice in tolerating or even encouraging their children’s complaints.

From the range of his patronage, you will see that Mr. Miller’s school was highly regarded over the county and beyond; some of his pupils went directly to college or medical or law school. When the Judge of the County Court died in the mid-nineties, a number of Mr. Miller’s old boys who had come to positions of influence and leadership in their communities decided that he ought to be appointed to the vacancy. He had not studied law, but such was their admiration for him and their confidence in his ability, they thought he would quickly learn anything he did not already know, and were sure he would dispense justice with an even hand.

While a student at Richmond College, someone wrote asking me to call on Governor William Hodges Mann in advocacy

of Mr. Miller's appointment. I went to the Capitol, found no set of front office guards to protect the Governor from random callers, so walked right on into his office. Governor Mann was sitting with his feet propped up on a table, his cuspidor on the floor beside him. The interview was short and informal. Mr. Miller became Judge Miller, and served to the satisfaction of the people till the old county courts were abolished by the Constitution of 1902.

Let me mention some of your *necessities* that we did not have. As indicated, educational opportunities were limited. Transportation progressed from canal to railroad with the Richmond and Allegheny on the James and the Virginia Air Line through the center of the county, but roads remained very poor.

We had no electricity; hence electric lights, radios, automatic heating and water systems for private homes were impossible. We had no telephones nor daily papers nor rural free delivery of mail. We had no improved breeds of stock; scrub sires roamed the commons, often broke through the fences the farmer had to maintain without cooperation from the owner of the adjacent common. We had little farm machinery; the use of chemical fertilizer was scant, no large supply was available. We had little understanding of sanitation and less of vaccination. Malaria, typhoid, diphtheria and smallpox were real scourges and were in many cases fatal to the victims.

We did not have some other things which you have and would like to get rid of. Every peach or apple or cherry or chestnut tree or grape vine or chinquapin bore its full load of fruit each year, without any spraying to prevent worms in the fruit. We did not need to pill our chickens and turkeys, or to vaccinate our calves to immunize them to germs or bacteria. I don't mean to imply that these few credits balanced all the debits mentioned above and others not referred to.

Life as we lived it then would be hard for those with your upbringing, but it was not to us nor to our parents. They were right well recovered from the Civil War, then 20 years behind us. There had been a panic in the interval, but it did not give as much embarrassment to rural folks as it did to the larger businesses in the cities. Farmers had in considerable degree ad-

justed to emancipation. Most farm work was done by manual labor. Homes had been rebuilt or enlarged to accommodate growing families. Nearly all farmers owned their homes and got their living and some of their clothing from the farm. Tools were simple; some of them were made in local shops. The little machinery used was not high; a Deering mower cost \$40.

Long cold spells were welcome every winter, for they gave an ice harvest. No one had a refrigerator, few had a convenient spring box to cool the buttermilk.

The Civil War, as we thought, had settled the big questions in our country; the oceans protected us from foreign interferences; we believed in Washington's admonition to avoid foreign entanglements. We did not feel the need of a phone or radio or daily paper. The world moved slowly. News a week old was still news.

There have been significant changes relating to the Church and ministry. The ministers no longer have time for sidelines, such as farming and practicing medicine. Much time is taken up with visiting, calls for consultation at his home or office, visits to organizational meetings, community-wide or state-wide. It takes work and work and work for the minister to keep ahead of the laity in this day of expanded educational and informational advantages. The ministers no longer wear the long double-breasted "Prince Albert" coats that were a sort of uniform for all public speakers, and were bought early by the young preachers to show that they belonged to the order.

Sermon topics were too often doctrinal or theological, giving occasion for the minister to talk for an hour or two hours, without saying much the people could understand or take home with them. This type of preaching stimulated denominational rivalry and sectarian jealousy. It is good that such has been outmoded. Efforts were made to provide for teaching and training children, but many Sunday Schools went into winter quarters at Christmas, celebrating with a Christmas tree or an oyster dinner. Attendance at "preaching" is no longer motivated in any degree by a desire to get neighborhood news, but I believe easy travel and church loyalty have maintained a good attendance.

There were diversions, for those at work and those at leisure. I have heard some of the great singers, pianists,

violinists, bands and orchestras; but if I could hear again the song of the harvest field, workers pouring out their souls in spirituals and work songs brought down from antebellum days, I'd gladly pay five times what it costs to hear Kreisler or Sousa or Caruso. Modern spirituals, as sung by Marion Anderson and others, are as different from the spirituals of those old days as hamburger steak with all the added ingredients and flavorings is from straight sirloin as it grew in the steer. So good was their sense of rhythm and harmony that they actually made music whetting the cradle blades, with wooden paddles tarred and dipped in sand. The hard work of cutting wheat seemed to become a song fest.

Another delightful occasion to me was a cornshucking. There was cider to moisten the throats, the songs were a bit livelier, with some love songs and folk songs replacing spirituals. Aunt Ellen had gotten several old roosters and tenderized them and put them into a chicken dumpling that would tempt a dyspeptic and not hurt him either. When the meal was served after the corn was all shucked, the uppermost idea in my mind was, "When will we have another one? Will some neighbor ask me to one next week?"

A red letter day for many Fluvannians was the fourth Monday Court. Leading citizens came from all parts of the county to see each other and to hear some candidate if there was an election in the offing. Then there was usually horse traders, and peddlers selling this or that at bargain prices. The day was not complete without a fight or two. A few had business in court, but that was a minor part of the attraction for most men.

The young people and ladies had amusements or diversions suited to their tastes, too. Occasionally there was a tournament; the winning knight crowned his best girl Queen, after which there might be a dinner and dancing. In the summer, picnics were held frequently in some shady grove; everyone in the community came; a big dinner was served. Square dancing on an improvised platform with undressed boards of non-uniform thickness, with Mr. Silas Seay playing his violin and calling off, had hardly an interruption through the day. The older ladies of a community had their Quilting Clubs and a quilting day included a big dinner and plenty of gossip around

the quilting frame. But this is enough to show how we made life worth living, mixing mirth with work, cultivating friendships, enjoying each other. Our lives furnished verification of the statement in the Good Book that a man's life consists not in the abundance of things which he possesseth.

I must not close without further reference to the good black friends whom I loved and trusted and enjoyed. In my early years Mother took a little orphaned black boy for my playmate. When Robert came to the proper age, he went to the "mourners' bench" at Byrd Grove Baptist Church and in due time "came through." On the Saturday morning before he was to be baptized in the Byrd Creek at Bell's Bridge in the afternoon, he and I were working in the tobacco, some distance from the others. We fell into a discussion about joining the church. I asked him how different he was going to be after he joined. He replied immediately that he was going to love everybody. I knew he had a justifiable grudge against a certain boy, so I said, "You don't mean you are going to love Jim Bryce, do you?"

Without hesitation he came back with, "I'm gwine to love *him*, but I'm gwine to hate his ways," Can any of us put the very core of Christianity into simpler words? These good people did not have what we call education, but they thought about what they heard. Often they boiled it down to the very essence which they could put in a few simple words. Their clear vivid statements of basic ideas were striking in their originality and made lasting impressions on me. These bits of concentrated wisdom have steadied and guided me in many difficult situations I have encountered in my long years of trying to help others form the habit of thinking through their problems.

## **VI A LEADER OF SOUTHERN BAPTISTS**

Dr. Warren Mosby Seay, who made his mark in Christian leadership and theology, began life at Redlands, a gently rolling hill farm near Wilmington where the Rivanna completes a wide sweep and reaches back to the highlands. The eldest of eight children of Burwell Warren Seay, III and Bettie Ann Loving Seay, he was born in 1878 on February 12, Lincoln's birthday, a date not then esteemed in a Southern community trying to recover from the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Dr. Seay was fortunate to spend his childhood in a close-knit neighborhood which included the adjoining farm of Cherry Hill, which had been his grandfather's home; and Mulberry Point, home of James McClellan Miller, who later became his stepgrandfather. for Judge Miller married Louisa Porter Seay.

It was at Judge Miller's private school, Rivanna Academy, that he prepared for a rigorous academic life (the history of Fluvanna records many such fine teachers and private schools). Mosby Seay's home, the school and Lyles Baptist Church formed the basis for his distinguished life.

He earned his B.A. degree from Richmond College in 1901 at the age of 23 and, after serving the Blackstone Baptist Church for two years, he began preaching to rural congregations in Scott County, Kentucky. This allowed him to enter the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and earn the degrees of Graduate of Theology, Bachelor in Theology and Master in Theology. Later, during his pastorate of the Fourth Avenue Baptist Church of Louisville, he completed studies leading to the degree of Doctor of Theology.

Following Seminary work, in 1906, Dr. Seay served the First Baptist Church in Suffolk and the Memorial Baptist Church in Hampton.

Mosby now found time for himself and sought a measure of home life. He and Dorothy Kerr Smith of Georgetown, Kentucky, were married in 1907. They were blessed with three daughters: Mariam, Dorothy Loving, and Julia Coulter.



Dr. Seay returned to Kentucky with his family in 1912 and, while serving as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Russellville, became Professor of Philosophy and Bible at Bethel College. In 1917 the College conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity and the Seminary offered him a chair on the faculty. He preferred to preach, however, and spent his next three years, until 1920, with the Fourth Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville.

From 1920 to 1928 he preached at West End Baptist Church in Atlanta, then nine years at the Baptist Church in Anderson, South Carolina, and his final nine years at the Baptist Church in Beaufort, South Carolina. After 45 years in the pulpit, Dr. Seay, retired and lived his remaining years in the charming seaside town of Beaufort as pastor emeritus, until his death in 1952 at the age of 74.

During his long and distinguished career and devotion to the needs of his many congregations, he also extended his wisdom and ability to the church as an institution. In Kentucky he served as president of the ministers' conference, corresponding secretary of the Kentucky Education Society, member of the State Mission Board and the board of directors of *Western Recorder*. In Georgia he was president of the ministers' conference, president of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, member of the State Mission Board and a director of *Christian Index*. In South Carolina, he again led the ministers' conference, was a Trustee of Anderson College, member of the Baptist General Mission Board, served on the board of directors for the *Baptist Courier*, as trustee of Mather School and Furman University and as vice-president of the South Carolina Baptist State Convention.

Dr. Seay was also prominent in the civic life of the communities in which he lived. He expressed his citizenship as a member of the Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Council Masons, Rotarians, Beaufort Historical Society, U.S.O. Board, chairman of the Better Race Relations Committee and as district chairman of the Boy Scouts of America.

He revered the wonders of nature, and a member of his family remembers a time, when roaming the woodlands of his home, he pushed aside the leaves and scooped up the black dirt, saying, "Wonderful old Mother Earth!"

He is remembered as a man with a sense of humor, sociable and lovable, and with a belief that Christians should be happy. He loved Lyles Church and when he returned to Fluvanna, he enjoyed preaching there. During his last illness he expressed a desire to "preach there just once more."

His family were amused by his love of words, which became apparent while he was quite young. They like to recall his protest to a young lady of his acquaintance. He and Eddie Loving had gone across the Rivanna courting, and Loving heard him exclaim over the lack of response from Miss Nannie, "Is your heart impervious?"

He was often praised because of his mastery of expression, a talent which led to his second career. Not only was he active in the editing of several church publications, but the fruits of his scholarship endure in the many books he wrote, such as *A Tale of Two Peoples*, *Jewels of Promise*, *Christ Triumphant*, and *Biography of Dr. Baron DeKalb Gray*.

*The Baptist Courier* of Greenville stated in "A Princely Man"

Mosby Seay was a Christian, a gentlemen, a lover and servant of the Most High God, a great preacher, an able penman, a friend of preachers. . . a winner of souls.

— J. Elwood Welsh

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The Fluvanna Historical Society was founded in 1964 to collect and preserve manuscripts and other documents relating to the history of Fluvanna County in Virginia; to maintain the Old Stone Jail at the county seat, Palmyra, as a museum where antiquities of the county may be exhibited; and to encourage historical research.

Meetings of the Society are held three times a year. Annual dues are \$2.00; a life membership costs \$50.00. A bulletin is published twice a year, distributed to members free of charge. Copies can be purchased for \$2.00 single copy; \$3.00 double copy. Readers are requested to contribute any information of historical interest they may have or may be able to obtain. The society will endeavor to publish as much of this information as may be possible.

All communications should be addressed to: Mrs. Henry C. McGehee, Chairman of Publications, Fluvanna County Historical Society, Box 132, Palmyra, Virginia.





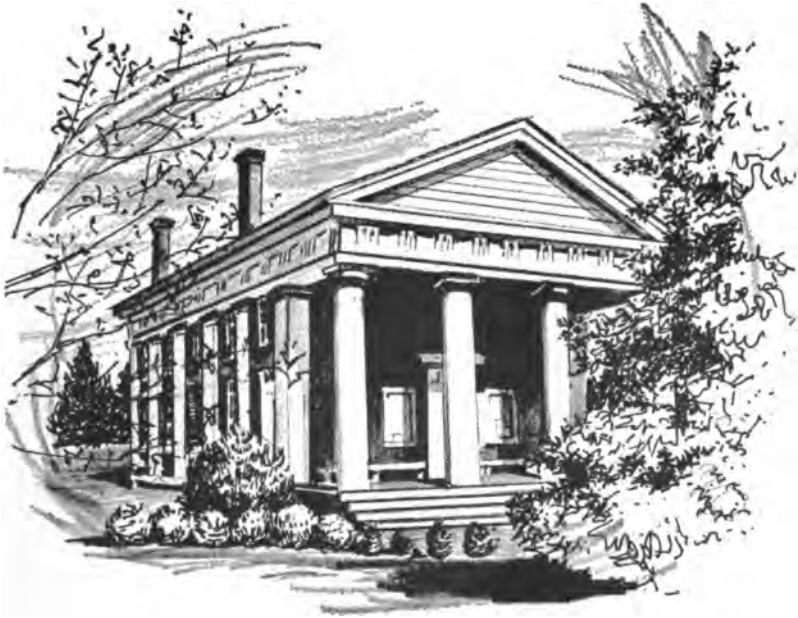
*The Bulletin of the*  
**FLUVANNA COUNTY**  
**Historical Society**

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**COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA**

*Built in 1830*



# **FLUVANNA COUNTY IN THE REVOLUTION**

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# I FLUVANNA COUNTY IN THE REVOLUTION

*by James C. Bradford*

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Fluvanna was one of Virginia's newest and smallest counties; yet the part she played in the American struggle for independence was important. The Commonwealth's arsenal, Point of Fork, was located in the southeastern corner of Fluvanna, and one of her major east-west arteries, the River Road, traversed the county. Thomas Jefferson, one of Virginia's war-governors, travelled the River Road regularly and military figures like Baron Von Steuben, the Marquis de Lafayette, and Banastre Tarleton all knew Fluvanna's roads. These are well-known personalities and events of "the Revolution in Fluvanna," not of "Fluvanna in the Revolution," and it is to the latter that this paper is directed.

The distinction between the two is important. The American Revolution lasted for almost a decade, and with the possible exception of the Civil War, it affected the lives of a greater proportion of Americans than any other war in which this nation has been engaged. It was the first revolution in modern history, and its legacy lives with us today. Americans were successful, of course, but before their victory was assured, the American people were called upon to make great sacrifices — sacrifices which were far from glamorous but which were crucial. Fluvannians clearly made their share of those sacrifices. In fact, in reviewing Fluvanna's contribution to the American war effort one is struck by two things: first, simply by how much Fluvanna contributed and secondly, by how willingly she did so.

Fluvannians were involved in the Revolution from its start. By the 1770's a decade of conflict had piled combustibles high in America, and only a spark was needed to ignite a revolution. In the spring of 1774 Parliament produced that spark when it passed the Intolerable Acts.<sup>1</sup> The free-holders of Albemarle County (Fluvanna was a part of Albemarle until 1777) reacted by assembling at their court house and passing a series of resolutions setting forth American rights.<sup>2</sup> This action was not in itself unique, but the tone and content of Albemarle's resolutions set them apart from others and

clearly placed them among the most radical passed in the colonies, thus reflecting the depth of sentiment running through her people.<sup>3</sup>

Central Virginians went beyond words. They foresaw early the possibility that force might be necessary and, like the Minutemen of Massachusetts, formed themselves into volunteer companies. George Gilmer, a leader of the Albemarle company, noted that that body numbered almost three hundred and a foreign visitor remarked upon the democratic nature of the group.<sup>4</sup> It was clearly a citizen's army as is shown by the fact that each man provided his own gun, shot-pouch, and powder horn and agreed to supply his own uniform in the form of a hunting shirt.<sup>5</sup>

When Virginia's royal governor, Lord Dunmore, seized the colony's powder on 20 April 1775, volunteers from across the state, including Fluvannians, met at Fredericksburg and threatened to descend on Dunmore. Had not leaders like Peyton Randolph and George Washington counselled against precipitous action, they would have marched on the capital at Williamsburg.<sup>6</sup>

When hostilities did erupt, Fluvannians, as members of the Albemarle militia (before 1777), as members of Fluvanna's contingent in the state militia, and as soldiers in the Continental Army, served in all the theaters of war. In 1776 they served not only in Virginia but also in North Carolina where they took part in an expedition against the Cherokee Indians. During the following four years there was little fighting in Virginia, but Fluvannians served with George Rogers Clark in the Northwest, with Nathanael Greene in the Carolinas, and with the Continental Army in New England and the Middle States.

It is impossible to determine exactly how many of Fluvanna's men served in the armed forces. Two centuries have taken their toll, and records have been so scattered and lost that even an accurate estimate of the number of men involved is beyond computation. However, Virginia law required militia duty, so most if not all able-bodied men did serve in that capacity for at least a brief period.<sup>7</sup>

One fact that can be established with some precision is the number of men who were drafted into service. In 1777 Virginia, for the first time, was forced to resort to the draft to fill her

quota for the Continental Army, and Fluvanna was ordered to induct ten single men. The next year she was called upon for seventeen more and, although it is not clear how many were called for in 1779, it is clear that another eighteen were called in 1780. Later that same year Britain invaded South Carolina, and Fluvanna was ordered to induct an additional forty men. Since the war at this time centered in the Carolinas and from Pennsylvania northward, all of these men were sent to serve beyond the borders of their home state.<sup>8</sup>

Provisions in various army acts reflect conditions within the Commonwealth. Headings such as "Fines on officers and privates for various delinquencies," "Refusing to march," and "Mutiny and desertion" show in part that not all citizens were responding as ordered. Such was not the case in Fluvanna. This writer could not find a single instance in which Fluvanna, her officers, or her men had to be reprimanded.

Shortly after the last of these acts was passed, a British fleet was sighted off the Virginia Capes and the Old Dominion was herself invaded. There were few regular army units in the state, and Governor Thomas Jefferson was forced to call out the militia in several counties, including Fluvanna, to repel the intruders.<sup>9</sup> It was at this time that the greatest number of Fluvannians were following the colors.

In terms of men, then, Fluvanna clearly contributed a large number; but, as important as the fact that she did, is the way in which she did so. Not once could the writer find evidence that she even so much as complained, and complaints to the state were common. For example, in April of 1783 Colonel William Edmunds of Fauquier County wrote to Governor Harrison to explain his county's failure to fulfill its draft quota. "Both the officers and the men," he reported "were under the impression [that] a majority of the counties in the state had never complied with the terms of the recruiting laws."<sup>10</sup> Perhaps this was true for the majority of counties, but it was not true for Fluvanna.<sup>11</sup>

Men form an army but just as vital to military success is their outfitting and maintenance. It was perhaps in this area that Fluvanna made her greatest contribution to the American war effort. She was, after all, a lightly-populated county. From the time of her formation in 1777 to the end of the war she never had as many as a thousand tithables, and a good

proportion of these were slaves and thus not suitable for service.<sup>12</sup>

What Fluvanna did have, if she lacked men, was a highly productive economy and an excellent location. In fact her location was almost ideal. She was far enough from the coast generally to keep her beyond the enemy's reach, yet conveniently near the combat area to provide support for patriot forces and to serve as a supply depot. Along her southern border the James was a river highway eastward down which all types of provisions could be transported.

During the war the Commonwealth constantly turned to requisition procedures to keep the army in the field. For example, soon after Fluvanna's separation from Albemarle she was called upon to provide thirteen "suits" for the army. Each one was to consist of two linen or cotton shirts, one pair of overalls, two pairs of stockings, one pair of shoes, and one fur, wool, or felt hat.<sup>13</sup> Fluvanna of course sent these items and continued to send supplies throughout the conflict.

Unfortunately Fluvanna's unfailing response was not typical of all counties as is shown by the fact that in October of 1781 David Anderson of nearby Hanover County had to inform the governor that he "had impressed only seven horses, since . . . the people [were] determined to secrete their best horses" and that he had had trouble collecting his county's quota of wheat.<sup>14</sup>

Such does not appear ever to have been the case in Fluvanna. In fact, the nearest documentation of evidence that Fluvanna ever failed to fulfill any obligation is a report in May 1781 by a George Rice concerning the delivery of a wagon by each of five counties. In that report he noted that as far as he knew none had yet arrived from Greenbrier, Amherst, Orange, Fluvanna, or Augusta counties.<sup>15</sup> But even had the wagon not yet arrived, it must have soon thereafter because there is no further mention in the public records of such a shortage from Fluvanna.

Fluvanna's record is similar in the area of tax collection. Her name appears only once among those on the long lists of counties owing balances to the state, and that one time was October of 1777.<sup>16</sup> The date is important because at that time Fluvanna had been in existence for only a short period of time. The act separating her from Albemarle had been passed the

previous May, and her justices had not been authorized to meet until the first Thursday in August.<sup>17</sup> Thus these officials had had less than two months to appoint officers, compile county tax lists, collect the money or tobacco due, and then transmit it to the state. Eighteenth century communications and transportation being what they were, this delinquency is more to be expected than not. Fluvanna does not appear on similar lists for the next year or on those for subsequent war years.

While on the subject of taxes, it is well to remember that Fluvanna was a new county and that her citizens bore a double burden. Not only did they have to pay the abnormally high taxes necessitated by the war but also those required to finance the construction of a court house and a jail.<sup>18</sup> The aforementioned obligations were all legal ones that had to be met, but Fluvanna went beyond them and contributed to the war effort in other ways.

At home she cared for the dependents of those men who were away with the army. One of the first entries in the County Court's Order Book reads: "Nancy Hix, wife of John Hix a soldier in the service of his country being very poor and having two small children petitioned the Court for support — Ordered that William Amos apply . . . the sum of £18 . . . in necessities for their support for one year."<sup>19</sup> A similar entry of a few months later reads; "On petition of David Wade setting forth that he had two sons in the Continental Army which rendered him incapable of supporting his family and praying some relief — It is ordered that Martin Key, Gent. furnish the said David Wade with two barrels of corn at public expense."<sup>20</sup>

Beyond emergency care for their own citizens, Fluvannians aided others. In 1782, after the defeat of the British at Yorktown and when peace was in sight, the state legislature provided that persons who had supplied labor, provisions, or anything else of value to the public forces during the war could file a claim for reimbursement with their county court.<sup>21</sup> In Fluvanna over 200 such claims were filed for items ranging from horses, wagons, guns, Indian corn, and flour to labor, tobacco canoes, and whiskey.

Some of these items had been impressed, but most had been voluntarily given even at a time when the ability of the

state eventually to pay for them was in doubt. In parts of Virginia people refused to sell except for hard cash; and if they knew that none was available, as was usually the case, many would hide their possessions to stymie any attempt to impress them. This latter practice became so widespread that in 1780 the legislature passed an act authorizing its commissioners "to break open, in the daytime, any house, barn, outhouse, mill or storehouse, or other outhouse where any such enumerated articles may be suspected to be and seize and take [them] into his possession for the public use . . ." It also provided that "if any person . . . shall willingly secrete or conceal any of the before enumerated items in his or her possession, he or she shall forfeit and pay to the commonwealth treble the value of the articles so secreted or concealed to be recovered by action of debt or information, instituted in any court of record . . ."<sup>22</sup> Widespread as this problem was, one doesn't find a single such proceeding against any resident of Fluvanna.

In addition to provisioning her own militia and helping provide for the men of the Continental Army, the record shows that Fluvanna also provided items for both the Amherst and Bedford County militias.<sup>23</sup>

Fluvanna's record is clearly exceptional. Part of the explanation of this lies in her location. She was far enough inland to keep her safe from the constant British forays launched from ships in the Chesapeake, yet near enough to the arena of conflict for her to get her supplies there when they were needed.<sup>24</sup> Thus she had an opportunity to serve an important function; but more important than the fact that her citizens had such an opportunity is the way in which they seized it. They were just the type of people most likely to respond to the American cause. Most were small, independent and self-reliant farmers whose spirit was constantly honed by contact with men like Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson. Both of these men were at the same time both leaders and products of the kind of society typified by Fluvanna. A sign of this homogeneity of spirit in Fluvanna is the fact that during the whole Revolution only one Fluvannian had to be tried for disloyalty, and he was found innocent.<sup>25</sup>

All of this economic activity in Fluvanna was certain to affect her economy. As the war progressed Fluvanna's

economy adapted to meet the needs of her people and the nation. Agricultural diversification increased as the market for tobacco declined and that for other products rose. Self-sufficiency became both a patriotic goal and a practical necessity, and Fluvanna's economy never returned exactly to its pre-war condition. Thus one chapter in her economic, as well as her political history, closed and a new one opened.

That new chapter is beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that when the war ended Virginians in general were optimistic and the Fluvannians were especially so. They saw the James River both as their link with the great western empire that their men had helped conquer and as the major outlet for their produce to the markets of the world. They expected to see these markets open wide as British economic tyranny disappeared. Most Fluvannians were probably looking forward, but some may have looked back—back to a time when both their county and their nation were being launched. And those who did look to the past could do so with pride because Fluvanna had clearly borne her share of the burden during that era, and borne it without complaining. She could be justly proud.

"Fluvanna in the Revolution" is a revised version of a speech made by Mr. James C. Bradford at the 1973 fall meeting at The Union. We are grateful to him for this article, the result of extensive research.

A native of Michigan, Mr. Bradford received his B. A. and M. A. from Michigan State University. While at the University of Virginia during 1972-73 he edited the account books of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello, an ongoing project. At present he is teaching history at the U. S. Naval Academy while working on his doctorate.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Parliament met on 7 March 1774 intent on punishing Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party. Three "Coercive Acts," as Britons called them, were rapidly passed. The Boston Port Bill (25 March) closed Boston Harbor to all commerce except food, fuel and military stores until the tea was paid for; the Administration of Justice Act (20 May) made possible the transfer of trials for capital offenses to courts in Britain; and the Massachusetts Government Act (20 May) virtually annulled the colony's charter and crippled self-government. A fourth act, the Quebec Act, was passed at the same time (20 May) but was not one of the Coercive Acts. It provided a permanent civil government for Canada and extended the borders of Quebec to include the Old Northwest in conflict with the charter claims of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Virginia. The government it established would be less independent of Britain than those in the other North American colonies and this factor, plus the boundary provisions, led Americans to consider it a part of the anti-Massachusetts group of laws. Together these four measures were called the "Intolerable Acts" by Americans.

<sup>2</sup> *Virginia Gazette* 4 August 1774.

<sup>3</sup> A year later John Coles wrote to his wife from Williamsburg that the people of the capital were not half as alarmed as were the citizens of Albemarle (John Coles to Rebecca Coles, 26 August 1775; Carter-Smith Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia).

<sup>4</sup> "George Gilmer to the Inhabitants of Albemarle," *Collections of the Virginia Historical Society*, new series VI (Richmond, 1887) and Howard R. Marraro (trans) *Memoirs of the Life and Peregrinations of the Florentine Philip Mazzei, 1730-1816* (New York, 1942) 209.

<sup>5</sup> "Gilmer Papers" *Collections*, 82-84.

<sup>6</sup> *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie) 28 April, 12 May, Supplement, and 9 June 1775, Supplement; Charles Campbell, *History of the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia* (Philadelphia, 1860), 608-609; Michael Wallace to Gustavus Brown Wallace, 14 May 1775, Wallace Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia; "Gilmer Papers" *Collections*, 80-84, 90-91; Southern Literary Messenger (1858), 26.

<sup>7</sup> William W. Hening, *The Statutes at Large, Being the Laws of Virginia*, 13 vols. (Richmond, 1809-23) VIII, 241-245.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* LX, 275-280, 339, 446; X, 222, 327.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* X, 573

<sup>10</sup> W. P. Palmer (ed.) *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts*, 11 vols. (Richmond, 1875-1893) III, 465.

<sup>11</sup> One negative comment about Fluvanna and the draft appears in a private letter from Thomas Jefferson to Isaac Zane in which Jefferson said, "The draught went down very easy in this part of the country except in the neighboring worthless county of Fluvanna." Julian Boyd (ed.) *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton, N. J., 1950-), II, 175. Examination of extant public records produced no hint of draft resistance in Fluvanna and in the absence of such verification it would appear that Mr. Jefferson

## NOTES

must have referred at most to ill-feeling or vocal complaint rather than any overt action.

- <sup>12</sup> Tithables: 1778: 882    1781: 880  
                  1779: 917    1782: 850  
                  1780: 984    1783: 837

Fluvanna County Court Order Book I (1777-1782) and II (1782-1784).

- <sup>13</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, X, 338.

- <sup>14</sup> *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, II, 514.

- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* II, 118.

- <sup>16</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, IX, 371.

- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* IX, 325-327, Fluvanna Court Order Book I, 1.

- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* I, 10, 22, 30.

- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* I, 11.

- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* I, 46; cf. 32, 55.

- <sup>21</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, X, 468-469.

- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* X, 233, 237.

- <sup>23</sup> Fluvanna Court Order Book II, 21.

- <sup>24</sup> It was Fluvanna's location that led to the choice of Point of Fork as the site for the state arsenal. During the war's last campaign, articles, including wheat and whiskey, were sent from Fluvanna to the Continental Army then besieging Yorktown. (*Ibid.* II, 24).

- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* I, 28.

## APPENDIX I

### ALBEMARLE RESOLUTIONS OF 1774

The author of "Fluvanna in the Revolution" writes of the unique Albemarle Resolutions passed in July 1774 to show the resentment to the acts of parliament. The men who formed Fluvanna County three years later were then active in Albemarle affairs, so we can safely assume that these resolutions reflected the sentiments of Fluvanna citizens.

Exactly two weeks before the central Virginia citizens gathered at the courthouse in Albemarle to shake a verbal fist at the king of Great Britain, the people of Fairfax County had met at Alexandria to draw up the "Fairfax Resolves." This July northern Virginia celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of those resolutions, and it is only fitting that in this bicentennial year we should take note of the words of our forebears which led to independence for our country. Fairfax had George Washington, but we had Thomas Jefferson, and if Washington was "the sword of the Revolution," Jefferson was surely "the pen."

The Albemarle Resolutions were printed in the *Virginia Gazette* in Williamsburg in the issue of Thursday, August 4, 1774. The masthead of this paper printed by Clementine Rind proclaims it was "Open to All Parties — But Influenced by None."

The lead article on the first page is an editorial on the topic of the day and then under the headline "Further Proceedings of Virginia" are the resolutions of Princess Anne County, Albemarle County, Buckingham County, Fauquier County, and Fairfax County.

What price freedom? They did not look forward to reckon the price. America has followed their example for two hundred years.

At a meeting of the freeholders of the county of Albemarle, assembled in their collective body, at the courthouse of the said county, on the 26th day of July, 1774,

RESOLVED, that the inhabitants of the several states of British America are subject to the laws which they adopted at their first settlement, and to such others as have been since made by their respective legislatures, duly constituted and appointed with their consent, that no other legislature whatever may rightfully exercise

authority over them, and that these privileges they hold as the common rights of mankind, confirmed by the political constitutions they have respectively assumed, and also by several charters of compact from the crown.

Resolved, that these natural and legal rights have in frequent instances been invaded by the parliament of Great Britain, and particularly that they were so by an act lately passed to take away the trade of the inhabitants of the town of Boston in the province of Massachusetts Bay, that all such assumptions of unlawful power are dangerous to the rights of the British Empire in general, and should be considered as its common cause, and that we will ever be ready to join with our fellow subjects, in every part of the same, in exerting all those rightful powers, which God has given us, for the re-establishing and guaranteeing such their constitutional rights, when, where, and by whomsoever invaded.

It is the opinion of this meeting, that the most eligible means of effecting these purposes will be to put an immediate stop to all imports from Great Britain (cotton, oznabrigs, striped duffil\*, medicines, gunpowder, lead, books and printed papers, the necessary tools and implements for the handycraft arts and manufactures except for a limited time) and to all exports thereto after the 1st day of October, which shall be in the year of our Lord, 1775; and immediately to discontinue all commercial intercourse with every part of the British empire which shall not in like manner break off their commerce with Great Britain.

It is the opinion of this meetings, that we immediately cease to import all commodities from every part of the world which are subjected by the British parliament to the payment of duties in America.

It is the opinion of this meeting that these measures should be pursued until a repeal be obtained of the act for blocking up the harbour of Boston, of the acts prohibiting or restraining internal manufactures in America, of the acts imposing on any commodities duties to be paid in America, and of the acts laying restrictions on the American trade; and that on such repeal it will be reasonable to grant to our brethren of Great Britain such privileges in commerce as may amply compensate their fraternal assistance, past and future.

Resolved, however, that this meeting do submit these their opinions to the convention of deputies from the several counties of this colony, appointed to be held at Williamsburg on the 1st day of August next, and also to the general congress of deputies from the several American states, when and wheresoever held; and that they will concur in these or any other measures which such convention or such congress shall adopt as most expedient for the American good. And we do appoint Thomas Jefferson and John Walker our deputies to act for this county at the said convention and instruct them to conform themselves to these our resolutions and opinions.

\*Osnaburg was a coarse linen, originally imported from *Osnaburg* in Germany and duffel was a heavyweight woolen fabric.

## APPENDIX II

### FLUVANNA RECEIVES COMPENSATION

On page 9 of this *Bulletin* Mr. Bradford states that in 1782 the legislature provided that persons who had supplied labor, provisions, or anything else of value to the public forces during the war could file a claim for reimbursement with their county court and that in Fluvanna over 200 such claims were filed. The act of the General Assembly was as follows:

An act for adjusting claims for property impressed or taken for public service.

I. WHEREAS it has been represented to this present general assembly, that sundry of the inhabitants of the several counties throughout this commonwealth have laboured under many hardships and inconveniences from the mode which has lately been pursued in impressing their property; insomuch that the auditors of public accounts have in divers instances refused to grant warrants upon certificates given for such impressment. And whereas many have procured valuations on oath to fix demands against the public for horses and other property taken or impressed for public service, at rates far beyond the real value. For remedy whereof, and for relief of all persons concerned,

II. *Be it enacted*, that from and after the passing of this act, the several county courts throughout this commonwealth are hereby empowered to receive all claims against the public on account of impressments made by any person for horses, provision and all other necessities, impressed or taken for public service; the said courts shall ascertain the value of all impressed articles in specie, as it shall actually appear in proof to them, independent of any preceding evaluation, and make report thereof to the next session of assembly, in order that proper measures may be adopted for paying off the several claimants according to justice, distinguishing articles applied to continental purposes, from those applied to the use of the state.

III. *And be it enacted*, that no claim for horses or other property impressed or taken for public service, shall be paid until the same hath been presented and allowed by such court as aforesaid, and reported to the next or the succeeding general assembly. And the said courts respectively shall cause a fair transcript of their proceedings in the business aforesaid to be laid before the succeeding assembly, specifying the ages, sizes,

and other general designations of the horses, and also general descriptions of the other species of property so impressed or taken, in order that all possible information be obtained and laid before the general assembly, to enable them to render justice to individuals and save the public from unjust demands and impositions; and may make such allowance to their clerk for his extraordinary services herein, to be levied in their next county levy, as to them shall seem proper.

IV. *Provided*, that all certificates for provisions upon which a price in specie has been affixed by the governor and council, agreeable to an act entitled, "An act to empower the governor and council to fix the value of provisions impressed for the use of the army," and which have been paid to the collectors in discharge of taxes, may be audited and paid into the treasury, anything in this act to the contrary notwithstanding.

Beginning at the County Court held April 5, 1782, certificates of claims were presented. Some of the first claims are reproduced here, essentially in their original form, for any effort at condensation omits some information that gives a more complete picture of the era. Omissions do occur, however, as the handwriting in this book of minutes, unlike other books, is very hard to read.

We are not sure that the claims were ever paid, for the claims approved by the court had to be approved by the legislature, and the legislature was interested in whether the articles were used by the continental army or the state. One presumes that some claims were considered the debt of the new federal government.

John Cobbs\* presented a certificate for 2 hands impressed by order of Col. W. . . ., and employed from the 6th of January 1781 'till the 26th of the same month, 20 days, for which he is allowed 6/ each pr. Day. Also a good Canoe which was lost, valued to £4, amounting in the whole to £16.

Geo. Thompson, Gent. presented an Account and produced vouchers to prove the same for the services of two Negroes and canoes impressed from the 9th of May to the 5th of June 1781 being 28 days at 12/ per day—also for 2 canoes of the bark kind which were destroyed by Order Genl

\*John Cobbs was the first clerk of Fluvanna, appointed at the first meeting of the justices, August, 1777.

Steuben valued at £7 each, amounting in the whole to £30-16.

Dan'l Bentley presented a certificate under the hand of William Barnet dated 13th day of June last past for a mare 4½ feet high, 8 years old for public service for which he is by the Court allowed £20.

Wm. Baker presented a certificate under the hand of Col. Napier, Commissary for Fluvanna County dated 29th Nov. last past for 23 Barrels Corn taken for Public Use for which he is allowed 11/ per Barrel amounting to £12-13.

Peter Ross came into Court and made it satisfactorily appear that his Gun was impressed sometime in June last for the use of the Militia who marched under Capt. Anthony Haden from this County which has not been returned. Valued by the Court £3.

James Askew came into Court and made it appear that he enlisted as a Soldier in the 5th Virginia Regiment for the Term of 3 years from the 1st day of December 1777, and that he has faithfully served the said term, and was legally discharged therefrom, it is therefore the opinion of the Court that the said James is entitled to the Land allowed by Law . . .

John Evans presented a certificate signed by Jas. King Quartermaster for one beef weighing 625 lb. taken for the use of Bottletourt [sic] Militia 27th August 1781, valued . . . £5-4-2.

David Jones presented a certificate under the hand of Alexander Deck[?], Lt. Col. dated 13th June 1781 for one large Lamb taken for the use of his detachment valued to 10/, also one other Certificate under the hand of Rob't Wright for 187 Fodder for the use of the Amherst Waggon and Stock on their way to Richmond valued to 6/ per Cwt. . . amounting the whole to £1-1.

James Severn presented a certificate under the hand of Rob't Wright, Waggon Master dated Jan. 17, 1781 for 9 Bushels Corn at 11/ pr. Barrel, also 120 Fodder at 6/ Pr. Cwt. for the use of the Waggon from Amherst amounting in the whole to £6-11-¾.

John Ashlin presented a certificate under the hand of Thos. Napier, Comy, dated Sept. 16, 1781 for 4 Beaves [sic] weighing 1300 . . . also 30 Bushels Wheat at 5/ Pr. Bushel taken for Public use amounting in the whole to £18-6-8.

Benjamin Thurmond presented a certificate dated Apr.

25th 1781 under the hand of Dan'l Tilman for — Bushels Meal taken for the use of Fluvanna Militia valued to 2/2¼ . . . certificate of 18 May 1781 under hand of Anthony Haden, Capt., 2 Smooth Base Guns for the use of Fluvanna Militia valued to £4-15.; another certificate of 15 July 1781 under the hand of Richard Napier, Capt., 375 lbs. Beef valued to 2d. per lb; 6 Bushels Oats at 1/6 pr Bushel taken for the use of Fluvanna Militia on their way to Camp; also another certificate dated 1st Oct. last under hand of Thos. Napier, D. Compy for 2 Beaves [sic] weighing 750 lbs. at 2d pr. lb.; 21 Bushels and 3 peck of Wheat valued 5/ pr Bushel and 1 Bushel Corn rated at 2/2¼, amounting in the whole £20-4-7½.

Wm. Johnson made it appear to this Court that his Gun was impressed sometime in June last and taken for the use of Capt. Haden's Company of Militia and the same has not been returned . . . he is allowed £3-10-.

John Moseley Haden is allowed . . . £4 for a likely Gun taken in June last for the use of Capt. Anthony Haden's Company.

John Martin (ditto above) allowed £4.

Wm. Paine presented a certificate under the hand of Thos. Napier, Colonel . . . dated 14 May last . . . a Gun taken for public use, valued £3. Another certificate dated 15 Feb. 1781 under hand of Thos. Napier, D. Comm . . . 1 Beef weighing 350 lbs for public use and the said Wm. Paine made it satisfactorily appear to this Court that a Beef weighing . . . lbs. was impressed (no certificate). He is entitled to pay for the same . . . amounting in the whole to £8-16-8.

Armiger Lilly presented a certificate under the hand of Richard Napier, Capt. . . July 19, 1781 for a Horse taken for the use of his compy, about 4½ feet high, 19 or 20 years old valued to £5, also a saddle and Bridle damaged 15/, amounting to £5-15-.

Wm. Paine presented a certificate under the hand of Thos. Napier, Colonel, Militia, bearing date the 14th May last for a gun taken for Publick use valued to £3; also another certificate under the hand of Thos. Napier D. Compy, dated 15 Oct. 1781 for 1 Beef weighing 350 lb. for Public use valued to 2d pr. lb., and the said Wm. Paine made it satisfactorily appear to the Court that a Beef weighing 350 lb. was impressed at the time of the former and that he was directed by the said Dy



Compy to secure the same in a pound, and before the Delivery thereof the said Beef by some accident was killed, and the said Paine was refused a certificate therefor, but the Court is of opinion that he is entitled to pay for the same, which the Court values at 2d pr. lb. — amounting in the whole to £8-16-8.

John Haden presented a certificate dated 1st May last under the hand of Thos. Napier Dy Com. for 37½ lbs Beef at 2d pr. lb., also another ditto for same dated Nov. 25th last for 300 wt. Beef for . . . for which he is allowed 2d pr. lb. — Aggregate £2-16-3.

Benjamin Weaver allowed 2d pr. lb. for 369 Beef taken for Public use by Certificate under hand of T. Napier, D Com., dated 3rd Dec. last. Aggregate £3-1-6.

Benj. Handcock, agent [of] John Napier presented a Certificate under hand of Rene Woodson for Provisions dated Dec. 3rd 1780 for 1½ Bushels Wheat taken for Public use for which allowed 5/ per Bushel, amounting £2-17-6.

Thos. Sowel presented a Certificate under the hand of T. Napier Dy Comy dated 29th Sept. 1781 for 2 Beaves adjudged to weighing 625 lb. allowed 2d pr. lb. amounting to £5-4-2.

Philip Webber presented a Certificate under hand of Thos. Napier Dy Comy dated 9th Oct. last for 1 Beef adjudged to weigh 237 lb.; allowed 2d., amounting to £1-19-6.

John Moore presented a certificate under the hand of Thos. Napier D. Comy dated 7th Nov. last for 1 Beef weighing 350 lb. It appearing to the Court that the said Beef had been corn fed for some time therefore has allowed for the same 3d. pr. lb. amounting to £4-7-6.

Wilson M. Cary presented . . . Certificate under the hand of Thos. Napier Dy Comy dated Oct. 11th last for 12 Beaves weighing 4070 lb., allowed 2d. pr. lb. Also another dated 30th March last for 100 Bushels Wheat at 5/, also another ditto . . . Wm. Barnet, agent for Wilson M. Cary presented a Certificate under Hand of Archibald McDonald dated June 12 last for 28½ Bushels Indian Corn at 11/ pr. Bushel for the use of the Brigade of Light Infantry under the command of Maj. General Marquis De la Fayette. [sic] Also another under the hand of Terrance Connell F. M. dated June 13 last for thirty-five Bushels one Peck and a half of Corn for the use Waynes Brigade Baggage Horses, allowed at rate 11/ pr. Bushel. Amounting in the whole to £65-18-10.

### APPENDIX III

#### COST OF DESTRUCTION IN FLUVANNA

War has always brought destruction, and during the Revolution British troops pillaged and destroyed at homes nearby as they camped or marched. They took or destroyed such "articles" as crops, livestock, slaves, food supplies, accounts and records — both private and public, and valuable personal and household objects.

In May 1782 the Virginia General Assembly passed an act "to ascertain the losses and injuries sustained from the depredation of the enemy within the commonwealth:"

1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly, That the courts of the several counties within this state shall, and they are hereby empowered and required either to hold special courts, or to appoint so many of their own body as to them shall seem most proper, to collect and state, from the best proof the nature of the case will admit of, the various losses and injuries, both public and private, which have been sustained within their respective counties during the war, from the depredations of the enemy in their several invasions, and to state the same under so many different heads as such losses or injuries may consist of, and return their proceedings herein, together with the proofs made in support thereof, to the governor and council, to be by them laid before the next assembly. (William W. Hening, *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. XI, 27.)

In accordance with this act, in September 1782 the Court of Goochland County appointed justices of Goochland to represent each district of the county, and the county citizens were required to list their losses in sterling or depreciated currency and present such lists to the justices for certification. Margaret Walker wrote about this action for Vol. 4, No. 1, *Goochland County Historical Society Magazine*. She states, "It has never been definitely established to what extent restitution was made for these losses — largely due to the exceedingly inflated currency of the time, and the fact that both the state and federal governments became involved in the settlements." Below her introduction was published a list of individuals who sustained losses and the value placed upon those articles taken. The list was taken from the "loose papers" of the county which are filed in the State Library.

In June 1781 the Revolution moved into Fluvanna County, and as the marching columns headed eastward they left destruction in their wake. Colonel John Graves Simcoe destroyed the Point of Fork Arsenal, and Tarleton's men raided farms and homes as they crossed Fluvanna. The story of his raid upon Carysbrook Plantation on the Rivanna has been handed down through generations of owners.

Long and painful research failed to prove that Fluvanna County court ever took notice or complied with the act of the General Assembly to claim losses. Persistence and frustration led to the order book for 1782, 1783, and then 1784, and there at the May Court the clerk recorded:

John Napier, Sackville King and William Oglesby Gentlemen, or any two of them are appointed to convene at Captain John Ware's in this County and ascertain what Damage the said John Ware has sustained for the Depredations of the British Enemy, agreeable to Law.\*

Finally at the September Court, 1784, the clerk recorded:

Joseph Haden, John Napier and Sackville King Gentlemen are appointed to collect and ascertain the Various Losses and Injuries both public and private which have been sustained within this County during the late War, from the Depredations of the enemy, in the Several Invasions, and State the same under so many different heads as such losses or Injuries may consist of and Return the same together with the proofs made in support thereof, to the Governor and Council.

In March 1785 the Court ordered that Roger Thompson and Samuel Richardson, Gentlemen, be added to the number appointed to "collect and ascertain" losses. However, the certificates submitted, or any record of them, remained elusive.

\*John Ware was a member of the first Court of Justices for Fluvanna in 1777, lived at Seven Isles, and in 1782 was head of a household of 10 whites and 41 blacks.

It is interesting that the names of several citizens of Fluvanna appear on the Goochland list. We can only assume that these men had holdings in both counties (or else men with similar names lived in Goochland at that time.) We are grateful to Goochland Historical Society for permission to list the following names which appear on both the 1782 census of Fluvanna (Heads of Families) and on the depredation lists of Goochland County, 1782:

	£	s	d	£	s	d
Cocke, Richard & Hartwele Est. <sup>1</sup>	271.			210.		
Johnson, Wm. <sup>2</sup>	11.	9.	0	12.	4.	
Martin, John <sup>3</sup>				50.	15.	
Napier, Rene <sup>4</sup>				40.	18.	9
Pace, John				7.	17.	
Pace, William				64.	10.	
Rice, Charles				20.	19.	6
Richardson, Sam'l <sup>5</sup>				276.	5.	
Ross, David	128.			100.	15.	
Ross, David <sup>6</sup> Sundry accts /an/ other Accts.				2632.	2.	0
Sadler, William				5.		
Ware, John <sup>7</sup>				116.	17.	6
Webber, Phillip <sup>8</sup>				80.		
Wilson, Jonathan				40.	10.	

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> General John Hartwell Cocke of Fluvanna inherited his Breemo Plantation from the estates of Richard & Hartwell Cocke. The 1782 census lists the Fluvanna estate with 45 blacks.
- <sup>2</sup> A man named William Leake Johnson moved from Goochland to Columbia with his father, Walter, before the county was formed, and according to family tradition they built a tobacco factory and quarried the granite cliff. In 1782 William's household listed 5 white and 4 blacks.
- <sup>3</sup> Deed Book I, Fluvanna, shows that John Martin was living in Fluvanna in 1777. He was one of the first members of Lyles Baptist Church (founded 1774); second lieutenant in a company of Militia (1777) with William Johnson his ensign. In 1782: 13 whites, 2 blacks.
- <sup>4</sup> According to deed books, Rene Napier was living in Fluvanna in 1777 and by 1782 was living by himself with three blacks.
- <sup>5</sup> Samuel Richardson was living in Fluvanna by 1780 and is listed in 1782 as a household of 5 whites, 4 blacks.
- <sup>6</sup> David Ross has become a legend known for the extensive real estate he owned. His holdings in Fluvanna included the Point of Fork estate on which he built the arsenal to supply rebel troops.
- <sup>7</sup> See former footnote
- <sup>8</sup> Philip Webber served as the first pastor of Lyles Baptist Church from 1774 until he moved to Kentucky in 1794.

This *Bulletin* is the first one published to observe the Bicentennial of the American Revolution. We hope to publish others, and perhaps in those we can publish some more of the claims for property impressed in 1782 such as reproduced in Appendix II.

## **FLUVANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS — 1973-1974**

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Palmyra, Va.

Goochland, Va.

Charlottesville, Va.

Newport News, Va.

Kents Store, Va.

Fork Union, Va.

Arlington, Va.

Fork Union, Va.

Plainview, Texas

Richmond, Va.

Sherman, Texas

The Fluvanna Historical Society was founded in 1964 to collect and preserve manuscripts and other documents relating to the history of Fluvanna County in Virginia; to maintain the Old Stone Jail at the county seat, Palmyra, as a museum where antiquities of the county may be exhibited; and to encourage historical research.

Meetings of the Society are held two times a year. Annual dues are \$3.00; a life membership costs \$50.00. A bulletin is published twice a year, distributed to members free of charge. Copies can be purchased for \$2.00 single copy; \$3.00 double copy. Readers are requested to contribute any information of historical interest they may have or may be able to obtain. The Society will endeavor to publish as much of this information as may be possible.

All communications should be addressed to: Mrs. Henry C. McGehee, Chairman of Publications, Fluvanna County Historical Society, Box 132, Palmyra, Virginia.







*The Bulletin of the*  
**FLUVANNA COUNTY**  
**Historical Society**

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Number 20

May, 1975

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**COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA**

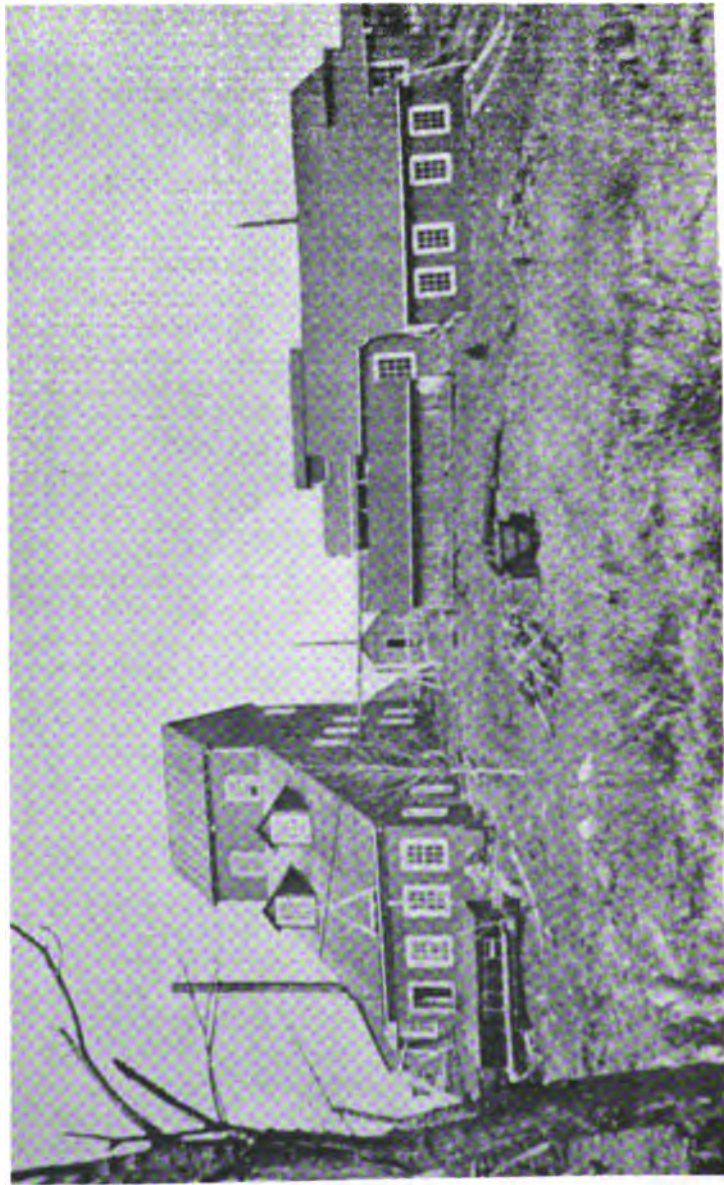
*Built in 1830*



## **THE GOLDEN PARADOX OF FLUVANNA**

by  
**John D. Horn**

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**MILL OF HUGHES GOLD MINING  
AND MILLING COMPANY, c. 1906**

## THE GOLDEN PARADOX OF FLUVANNA

### FOREWORD

John D. Horn

With private ownership of gold in the United States now permitted (at its highest market value in history), and with interest in the subject somewhat revived, it is reasonable, and fun, to be curious about the history of gold in the area and its potential significance. The mineral resources of Fluvanna County, including gold, appear largely untapped and there is much to talk about and investigate.

Gold is not the rarest of metals, but it has historically been the most prized. Its luster, malleability and imperviousness to acids and surroundings have insured value to man since he first decorated himself with trinkets. It inspired ancient kings and artisans and fathered today's chemistry and the atomic age through the alchemic work of the Middle Ages. Efforts in 1934 to divorce gold from the world's money market have proven unsuccessful, and it reasserts itself today as the strongest trade instrument available.

About 60% of gold production today is in South Africa where one of over forty mines produces more gold than the entire United States. There, gold is recovered from mines over 2½ miles deep from which water in millions of gallons is pumped daily. Hundreds of millions of dollars are invested in reaching veins measured in inches. The mines recover over three tons of gold each day and process it into 400 ounce bars exceeding 99% purity. Russia and Canada are the next largest producing countries, together recovering about a third of South Africa's output. The United States ranks fourth with about 1,200 troy ounces per year, and declining. The largest producing mine in the United States is the Homestead, located in South Dakota. Other sources in the nation generally recover gold as a by-product of copper or zinc-lead refining.

Mr. Horn is a native of Texas who bought property on Route 608 in 1967 and moved here when he retired after twenty-seven years of service with the Treasury Department. He states he is a Virginian "by choice," and we are glad he chose Fluvanna County, for we appreciate his interest in the County, his persistence in research, and his generosity which gives us this account of Fluvanna gold. We are also grateful to the Fluvanna County Chamber of Commerce for their financial contribution to the cost of this *Bulletin*, and to Robert W. VanderVliet for his sketches.

## II INTRODUCTION

It is surprising to find so many Virginians who are unaware that the state was once a bonanza of gold mines. There are residents of Fluvanna County who view the "news" with incredulity. Gold here, gold in quantity? Were it a common topic, more geographically removed, or even of less economic promise to the area, one would expect skepticism. Even old-time residents who have lived their lives with a vague and nostalgic knowledge of operations of a century ago feel no relevancy. The fact is that it can be dangerous to walk through isolated wooded areas in the County because of old shafts, some quite deep; there are sunken tunnels, prospecting pits and remains of ore processing mills!

Unlike the gold story of the western United States, which fills enough pages to paper the Sierras, that of the eastern foothills of the Blue Ridge hardly exists, save in repetitious geological description. We are therefore reduced at times to recounting third-hand information and reviewing property ownership records.

Most early owners of property with suspected gold-bearing ore fled from the thought of personally crawling about in a deep tunnel, gold or no gold, and at first limited their operations to surface deposits, along with others lucky enough to have access to a branch or creek where they could "wash sand." The 1830's were times of exploration, anticipation and great fun in Virginia (despite the depression of 1837), and although the term "gold rush" was not used, they set the stage for the hoopla and fortune hunting that stirred the hearts of the "forty-niners" in the next decade.

Paradox lies in the fact that the gold deposits of Virginia, and most particularly of Fluvanna, have not to this day been much more than superficially exploited. Their extent, by some authorities, seems staggering. With the exception of one mine in the County, and that a rather doubtful example, work essentially ended with the Civil War, before techniques, equipment and efficient business and management methods were introduced. Shafts seldom went over one hundred feet deep, and veins were barely tapped (many mines in the western United States are over 1,000 feet deep and African mines are measured by the mile).

Underground water was an almost unconquerable villain, and antiquated recovery methods frequently resulted in discard of more gold than was retained.

There is reason for suspicion that "high rollers" brought to Virginia some shady financing practices and oversold stock transactions that cooled the temperatures of would-be legitimate investors and eventually led to mine closings. Some mines changed hands repeatedly. Private

ownership of property, as opposed to claim staking in the West, inhibited an influx of prospectors. The Civil War drove northern entrepreneurs and their capital away and marked the end of slave mining labor which had previously made even the most marginal workings profitable.

Despite easy access to international ports provided by rivers and waterways such as the James River-Kanawha Canal (the lack of such access was a severe and costly handicap to mining in the West) and despite the fact that a nucleus of professional miners was working from northern Virginia to Georgia, the eastern mines were deserted in answer to the raucous call from California in 1848. Fifty thousand hopefuls made the trip by land that year, and twice as many set out by ship. This, and an eastern war which could be avoided by merely staying in the west, so completely eclipsed the gold fields of the East that they were, and are, all but forgotten.

Let us be candid about Virginia mines. No one really knows how much gold was recovered, for a variety of reasons. Mine operators were close-mouthed about the matter of actual proven and sustained production, except when issuing prospectus reports to stimulate stock sales. Incensed because a branch of the United States Mint was opened in North Carolina and none in Virginia, operators sometimes sold bullion to businesses here and in other states for coinage and jewelry, to individuals for investment, or shipped ore to England, rather than undertake less profitable transport to Philadelphia. These transactions, plus the simple trading practiced, were done with little or no public record. We still hope that, hidden away in some attic, there are contemporary accounts which will be brought forth.

Fluvanna seldom received publicity as a gold producing County, being some years behind the first strike of Spotsylvania County. Fluvanna suffered, or enjoyed, an anonymity which persists until today, but the County's latent importance in regional situation and gold potential has been proven, though the last mine closed during the depression.

The story of the County's gold, of necessity, broadens to involve other counties and states along the eastern reaches of the Appalachians. It must include a smattering of geology, a consideration of the impact on the national economy, and technical and manpower assistance from England. Certainly, a too provincial approach would portray little more than a tracing of "hole digging," and lead to misconception.

Living here where it actually took place, we have the opportunity to look back a hundred and forty years and, with only a slight effort, see the spectres of the earliest gold seekers with pans or skillets headed for nearby creeks on an afternoon lark. Whether a nugget or flake was found was secondary—it was high adventure.



### III GEOLOGIC CONSIDERATIONS

About a million years ago the earth's crust began to heave and buckle from great internal pressures. Volcanoes had been active for a million years before this. Underlying strata of rock were thrust into one another and upward. Higher and higher temperatures melted rocks, and mineral deposits, including gold, collected, separated, and collected again. The process continued, and ranges of mountains, foothills and plains areas were formed of materials which had been shifted and mixed and occasionally brought up from hidden depths.

Synclines (upward folds) and anticlines (downward folds) developed from massive sheared rock faces, and rock consistency was sometimes altered. This geologic "pre-Cambrian" age preceded by three-quarters of a million years the appearance of animal life and almost a million years the emergence of man. Although it was followed by great floods and an ice age, it left exposed to man's later reach the minerals and rocks he was to find so useful and desirable in advancing his culture and his wealth.

A complete geologic analysis of our region has not been carried out, despite many fragmented surveys. Accurate structural data concerning areas between synclinal belts are lacking. Latter day geologists argue that current evidence of chronologic sequences of some areas is the reverse of that announced earlier. So, what truly lies beneath the surface of these rolling hills? Except for specific limited areas, and at specific limited depths, there is only speculation.

A general review of the evidence thus far indicates a veritable Pandora's box open to exploration, with the probability of rich reward. Professor Frederick Overman, a renowned minerologist of the last century was inspired to write:

There are gold-bearing localities in Virginia and North Carolina which, if not equal to those of California at present, will be of greater importance in the future, and, I predict, more sure and lasting.

Gold, in Virginia, has been prospected and found to some extent in sixteen counties, although only nine constitute the narrow auriferous belt extending northeast-southwest through the state: Buckingham, Culpeper, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Goochland, Louisa, Orange, Spotsylvania and Stafford. Fluvanna, in its central position, perhaps best represents the metamorphic, undulating and folded character of the region.

Fluvanna County, as an early offspring of Albemarle, has received even less geologic and commercial attention than other Piedmont regions. Historically, its prominence has been low-key. Even so, one

cannot but wonder why Fluvanna is so meagerly mentioned among the resource-wealthy counties of the state. Records of mineral exploration, however, fail to show any extensive effort to locate anything in Fluvanna except, of course, some gold. It might be reasoned, in this regard, that Fluvanna has traditionally been more concerned with less commercial pursuits—those that tend to revitalize the mind and spirit rather than the pocketbook.

Fluvanna has most certainly not achieved its potential in gold recovery. Analysis of the County's rock strata, basic geological formations, actual recovered gold and "finds" from early prospecting efforts leads to the inevitable conclusion that ore is here for the taking. Profitable mining, with today's methods and in today's market, would seem reasonably assured. Needed, of course, is investment capital and someone with the flair of Commodore Robert Fielding Stockton, the first to make a concerted effort in the County with the breadth of inquiry and imagination likely to achieve results. He worked the largest mine in the County and recovered gold at a profit.

Some fifteen mines of record have been worked in Fluvanna since 1832, attesting to the availability of gold, but no recent documentation has been found containing assay data. Early geological observations usually consisted of "visits" to mine shafts, reviews of tailings (leavings) and exposed veins and discussions with workers.

It is interesting and coincidental that the Virginia Division of Mineral Resources is presently devoting manpower to a study of mining developments of the past. The experiences of at least 250 Virginia gold mines is under scrutiny. Several illuminating bulletins have been released by the agency and its representatives have been both hospitable and helpful in locating information for our use here.



**An Arrastra, a Pulverizing Device**

#### IV

### HOW THE GOLD WAS MINED AND PROCESSED

A history of gold in the United States should begin with the collection of the metal by Indians from stream beds and nearby plains. Such "placer" deposits had, from earliest times, been the traditional source and almost always the first means of locating minable ore. Evidence has been found in the old Belzoro Mine in Goochland County indicating Indian smelting at some early date.

Indians in North America had discovered just enough of the prize to interest English explorers and settlers, who, during the sixteenth century, had watched with chagrin as the Spanish hauled their golden plunder from the New World. In 1606 James I granted the London Company the right to "dig, mine and search for all manner of Mines of Gold, Silver and Copper, as well within any part of their said Colonies, as for the said main lands on the Backside of the Same Colonies." Indian refining of copper in Virginia added to the flames of interest, and Captain John Smith journeyed inland one day's march to a mine of copper called "Wasador" located on "a river of high rocks."

Unfortunately, the frantic digging of the early seventeenth century came to nothing, and the first shipments of ore to England proved barren by refining methods of the day. The hopes of adventurers and settlers in Virginia died, and development of this and other colonies ultimately derived from more sober incentives.

In the late 1820's a chunk of rich ore was found by children in Orange County, and consciousness of the metal spread quickly. Additional finds were made. Small operations became common through the gold belt, ranging from a one-man, one-shovel effort to elaborate imported systems. By 1830 placer gold mining in the southern states of Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia had become almost commonplace with farmers using off-season "dirt washing" to supplement income, and whole families panning for a hoped-for fortune. Thousands in Virginia washed gold, storing it in jars and trading it in stores in place of coin.

"Panning" was done in every conceivable utensil the farm kitchen could offer. The classic "miner's pan," originally his cooking pan, was flat-bottomed, of sheet-iron, about 16 inches in diameter, and with sloping sides four or five inches wide.

In its use, it was filled with sand, shaken well to settle any gold toward the bottom, then dipped in and out of the water in an inclined position to permit sand to escape slowly. Skill was required in separating the last bits of sand from any gold present.

The mining of gold and its processing dates back into antiquity. It was well-known in Egypt 5,500 years ago, and probably was a standard

of value. Some improvements in ore crushing techniques were introduced, but little was added to the basic system of extraction and refining for 5,000 years. In 1519 stamp batteries were introduced for crushing ores, and screens were set at the outlet of mortars in 1556. The use of mercury for separating gold from other materials was described by Pliny and continued as a part of processing to modern days. The catching of gold amalgam by means of copper plates is derived from a system introduced in 1609. Mercury was not "charged" into stamp batteries to collect gold onto copper plates until about 1850. The chlorination process of gold ore treatment originated in 1848, and the cyanide process in 1887. The use of nitric and sulphuric acid for separating gold and other metals, used since the early sixteenth century, gave way in modern times to the electrolytic process.

As to searching for gold, the early prospector liked a land area showing evidence of having been upraised, mixed and subjected to igneous action from below. His interest grew as he observed evidence that highly pressurized molten materials had been injected into the original country rock of the area. He looked for a high proportion of "acidic" silica, an efficient trap of gold and silver particles, and searched exposed ground layers for mineral particles and scales eroded from a vein and carried away by water. Following his clues up a stream, he looked for the blues and greens of copper or cobalt and the brown-red of hematite, and he was interested in the black of silver. Yellow was the only color he more or less disregarded—it would be iron pyrite, "fool's gold."

In Virginia, of course, the finding of gold in the nineteenth century was the result of a less direct and less knowledgeable approach. The plow bringing to the surface a high quality quartz rock, the curiosity of children wading in a creek, or the eye of a hunter caught by a "different" formation, are examples of first "discoveries." Placer digging and panning of stream sands led to more concentrated efforts, and eventually to underground veins which warranted underground mining.

For small operations, a cradle, or rocker, was used. Many variations of these were developed, commensurate with the ingenuity of the individuals. Sand was shovelled into the cradle, while water flowed through it. Baffles slowed the mixture as it passed through the device, and a screen was sometimes added to capture gold particles. The resulting materials and minerals were panned and then heated, perhaps on a shovel, and gold was left.

The "Virginia Burke Rocker," popular in Virginia for placer washing, was like an infant's cradle, watertight, open at the top with a perforated sheet-iron false bottom and a chamber below, and charged with mercury for the purpose of amalgamation. This was placed upon rockers for agitation, and water was poured constantly over it.

For larger operations, a sluice was used. This was a long, wooden trough of varying dimensions, designed with baffles to interrupt the journey of heavy particles in moving water. Sluices were set up easily near a stream. Ore-bearing sand was fed into one end and residue washed back into the stream from the other end. (See sketch on page 15.) Flooring of these sluices was rough and irregular to catch any gold present in the muck passing over it. The material lodged there was periodically removed and panned, or ground in a revolving barrel with mercury and cannon balls. The resulting "amalgam" was then squeezed through chamois leather or canvas to remove the mercury and permit gold retrieval.

Placer mining in Virginia lost its appeal in the 1840's as a means of recovering commercial gold quantities, particularly as it became understood that surface gold was limited, and that the granular gold, bound in quartz, and of almost microscopic particles, must be mined from under ground before a fortune could be made. In the early 1830's Virginia mining was severely handicapped because of a lack of knowledge, a lack of equipment and a lack of capital. It was not long, however, before news of gold strikes swept the nation and money became less a problem. With money came imported machinery and Cornish miners, who, for generations, had developed their burrowing skills in the huge tin and copper mines of England.

In order to describe a pre-Civil War operation, we will consider one which, in some manner, had been adequately financed. The engineering questions of direction, nature and extent of interior working, were computed, or guessed, and the means of moving and disposing of tailings and ore were settled. Water removal was usually an immediate problem and was handled by installation of a steam powered pump. Transportation and supplies and even housing were matters of concern. Cornish mining team leaders may have been employed to insure industry and competence.

The "adit" or shaft might have been a vertical entrance extending over 100 feet to working levels from which tunnels would project along vein routes. Hoisting of ore was accomplished by cable and man power, or in larger operations, by steam winches. "Cross-cuts," or lateral tunnels, were dug to interconnect other tunnels or to follow a series of veinlets along their natural paths. The removal of ore took place in "drifts" which followed the lodes, for whereas planning a large mine of today involves analysis of total ore bodies and development of a complex of tunnels to begin with, planning of early small mines did not. Mines in Fluvanna were frequently opened by slanted tunnels sunk in accordance with the strike and dip of the vein.

Where the lode was found to be enlarged to form a rich pocket, it was cleaned out in a frequently dangerous operation called "stoping." This

was usually accompanied by the construction of roof supports or development of floor-to-ceiling rock columns.

As buckets of waste, or ore, were filled in the main shaft, the "Mucker" at the bottom signalled to the winchman what disposition was to be made of the contents. (Some waste dumps in Fluvanna have been found, upon analysis, to contain processable ore, making one wonder whether bucket signals may have gotten mixed.) Small dump cars rolling on tracks later came into use, pulled by the "mine mule", a trained and intelligent animal.

Pumping of water was a major and critical problem in Virginia and was responsible for the end of mining in many cases. The Cornish Pump was an absolute necessity. It consisted of a surface steam plant connected by a bell crank and steel rods to a pump in the mine sump. The pump was subject to constant breakdown and became a source of added nuisance. The upshot was that mines in the area usually went no deeper than a hundred or so feet and frequently no deeper than the natural level of the water.

Timbering was no great problem in Virginia from the standpoint of availability, but the wrestling of 8' by 8' sawed beams into a narrow tunnel and their erection onto mortised joints was killing work. Such frames were set about every five feet, braced along the sides to withstand the pressures of blasting. All facets of mining were difficult and dangerous, but the task was largely relegated to hardy, knowledgeable men who expected no quarter from it.

How to process the ore and lose as little as possible of its valuable content, was another question which required direct, constant attention. To have one's own mill was very desirable, permitting close observation of ore and better security in the gold recovery process. It precluded, also, the necessity of sharing accounting information with others.

In 1835 this description of Virginia milling methods appeared in the report of the Supervising Committee of the United States Mining Company:

The plant consists of a crushing (rolling) and a verticle stamping mill in a building 26' by 36'. Both mills are located on the ground floor and are propelled by a water wheel eleven feet in diameter, with an eleven foot face. The crushing mill has three sets of cylinders two feet in length and fifteen inches in diameter, the first or upper of which set is fluted, the other smooth. The ore is thrown into a hopper on the upper floor, from which it is conducted over an inclined shaking-table to the fluted cylinders by which it is crushed to a size of from one-quarter to one-inch diameter. The crushed material is equally divided and goes to the two sets of smooth cylinders. By then it is further greatly reduced, ranging from impalpable powder to grains as large as coarse hominy. From these cylinders it falls into a sifter having the fineness and motion of a common meal-sifter, from whence the material which passes through is conducted

to twelve amalgamators, constructed upon the principal of the Tyrolean bowls (early "panning" devices), making ninety to one hundred revolutions per minute. They perform the office of washing and amalgamating. The sand discarded by them, after being washed, is conducted through troughs to the vertical mill, where, being reduced to an impalpable powder, it passes in the shape of turbid or muddy water to another set of amalgamators similar to those above-mentioned, and then to the river. The portion of the ore reduced by the cylinders which passes over the sifters is conducted to the vertical mill and is treated in the same manner.

Although there is little mention of the amalgamation process itself, it is reasonable to assume that mercury was introduced at some point as a collecting agent and retrieved or lost at some later stage.

The mining, industrial and scientific journal, *The Virginian*, stated in 1881 that a ten-stamp mill with amalgamated copper plates was introduced at Fluvanna's Tellurium Mine (after its lease to "a northern man"), to "save" the gold. It was determined by authority, however, that some 40% was lost in processing. (The Snead Mine had begun to utilize the chlorination process.)

The natural character of Fluvanna gold had long since been recognized as very fine and not readily separated from its gangue by the old amalgamation and wet-crushing techniques practiced earlier. The gold from a number of local mines was found to be "laminated" and in fine particles so thin and delicate that they were carried off by water. Professor M. H. Stowe of Washington, D.C. conducted an assay from the Tellurium Mine ore by the method of that day, crushing it, passing it through a 60/ inch sieve, agitating and drying it, etc., and found he had accumulated a value of \$39.98. He then assayed his tailings (residue) from his operation and found them to be worth \$48.08—more loss than gain!

(We might note that opinion of the 19th century set Virginia gold ores at \$5 to \$15 per ton—gold market value at the time approximately \$20 per ounce. This did not hold true in some individual cases which ran \$100 per ton.)

Another, and perhaps more interesting, mill arrangement was developed in Fluvanna. The Hughes Mine, being so accessible to the planned railroad right-of-way, constructed a modern mill in 1905 and 1906. A prospectus was issued by the Hughes Mining and Milling Company which included a glowing description by the General Manager, Mr. William Bugbee. Thomas L. Watson, Ph.d., of the University of Virginia, visited the mill in 1907 and stated:

The milling plant, comprising stamp mill, concentrating, cyaniding, and furnace departments, is commodious and modern in all respects. The three following facts have been

demonstrated by Mr. Bugbee: (1) That more than 90% of the gold in the ore can be saved. (2) That the ore will average nearly \$11 per ton of gold. (3) That the total cost of mining and treating the ore is a fraction over \$4 per ton based on present capacity.

The mill was apparently considered a show place at that time and promised a profitable future. Unfortunately, it lasted, at most, a year. Why it failed, we can only speculate.

The mill and mine were owned by New York investors at that time. Perhaps the stock was over-extended or perhaps there was mismanagement or even fraud. We are told that the gold from the mine was taken to New York twice a year by an official and sold, and that the workmen were paid wages when he returned. There came a day when he took the gold to New York and did not return! Rumor of long standing has it that the workmen banded together and secured approval from the County Court to dismantle and sell the mill equipment for their wages. This is disputed, however, by a deed of sale of the mill in 1910. It is now difficult to reconcile the photograph of the mill (page 4) with the overgrown foundations that remain.



**A Sluice for Washing Gold**



## V

### LOCATING FLUVANNA MINES

A line drawn from the top center of Fluvanna County to the bottom center in a northeast-southwest direction will generally separate the gold region of the east from the thus-far non-productive area of the west. The Division of Mineral Resources lists sixteen former mines in this eastern part of the county as a record of early operations. The most extensive cluster of mines (in the state) are found in the northeast on both sides of the Fluvanna-Goochland line, although these do not represent, necessarily, the greatest concentration of ore.

Mining done in the County seems to reflect as much the strength of will and effort of early developers as it does the location of ore veins; perhaps more so, as developers, faced with the problems of financing and arranging for leases, concentrated their most abiding attention on known deposits. This is typified by the Tellurium Mine which seems to have received more than its share of attention and recognition.

The large southeastern area of the County is made up of Granodiorite formation. The northeast mining area of the Columbia syncline, similar to the central formation of the County, extends some four to five miles along the county line. Adjacent, to the west, is an area up to four miles wide and eight miles long extending northeast into Louisa County and made up of metamorphosed volcanic sedimentary rock, similar to the wide quartz-feldspar area in the central region.

The deposits of the eastern reaches of the County extend northeast a mile or so north of Columbia to near the Louisa County line. At least twelve mines of one size or another were located in this limited region, most on the same lode and in some cases almost indistinguishable one from another in country rock, strike and dip of veins, etc.

The mines located nearer the center of the County reflect a more diversified character of geological formation. The Long Island Syncline, crossing the James River from Buckingham County about three miles above Brems, extends its long finger-like projection northeast some twelve miles. This area, from one-quarter to one mile wide, is characterized by extensive slate. Adjacent, to the west, a wider area extends the length of the County and is characterized primarily by quartz-feldspar rock, very fine-grained, and quartzite and phyllite. The narrow fingers of gneiss and schist extend along this area at different points, traversing several miles, each showing metamorphosed igneous rock. Considerable slate is found in the northern sector of this formation, although slate is more usually associated with the larger Arvonian formations to the east.

The Arvonian syncline of quartzite and slate, a mile and more in width, crosses the James at and above Brems and is evident for about

five miles into the County. Surrounding it, and following its course, is a large arc of similar, less diversified slate formation.

In this central area we are concerned primarily with three mines: the Page, located on Long Island Creek, the Snead, about one mile northeast of Fork Union, and the Hughes, north of Cohasset. Considerable prospecting and, probably, early placer mining also occurred in this central region, judging from the multitude of pits and surface cuts which still dot the central synclinal projections, reaching northward almost to the Louisa County line.

Information on some Fluvanna mines is not available, and for others amounts to no more than accounts of leases recorded in the Clerk's Office of the County. Field searching frequently results in the location of the trenches, shallow holes with their characteristic mounds of quartz and dirt, and indentations from old shafts. This is not always true, however. Deep and dangerous shafts still exist at some mines and extreme caution must be exercised in mining areas. No fencing or safety measures of any kind have been provided for protection. For this reason, no effort is made here to give specific locations. Anyone with adventuresome leanings, who is tempted to make an "afternoon visit" to a mine, would do well to consider the dangers involved and the fact that all the mines are located on private property.

## VI THE TELLURIUM MINE

Until 1832 gold mining in Virginia was largely restricted to surface or placer efforts. In that year George W. Fisher, friend of the owner of a 344-acre tract of land in the extreme northeast part of Fluvanna County, ventured into the woods with rifle primed for a day of hunting. He found gold instead.

His find, though not the first in the State, by any means, quickly became unique in all Virginia, for Mr. Fisher was not content to wash surface deposits. He enlisted professional assistance and followed the "color" to its vein source. The find became the first underground mine in Virginia, as the strike and dip of the veins were tracked below the ground surface.

In 1834, Mr. Anderson Hughes, owner of the property, leased a portion of it to George W. Fisher, Sr., his two sons, G. W. Fisher, Jr. and J. A. Fisher, Judge D. W. K. Bowles, Buford Kirtley and Dunlop Fisher. Below-surface mining began in earnest as an organized venture. Terms, which must have been the product of much head scratching, provided for one dollar cash plus 20% of surface gold, and 50% of vein gold. Hughes agreed to pay 50% of expenses and retained the right to continue farming. A law-suit in 1836, among family members who claimed

ownership rights, failed to disturb the lease, but reduced the share of Hughes.

At first the ore was raised and crushed by hand, and the gold separated from its gangue (worthless material) by washing in a box. The ore was crushed in wooden mortars lined with iron. The heavy pestles attached to "sweeps," were also operated by hand.

Later, an "arrastra," or pulverizing device, was installed, (see illustration on page 9) driven by horse power, and finally a small water-powered mill was built on the branch about a mile below the mine. This was probably the first stamp mill, or "pounding mill" as it was termed, to be erected in this country, an innovation probably derived from Europe. By 1846 the mill was enlarged and a six-stamp steam mill was placed in operation. Ore was crushed on an iron die-plate by 50-pound wooden stamps with iron shoes; the stamp stems were square and did not revolve as in later mills, for the cams worked in slots cut into the stems.

The mine continued a profitable operation for 14 years under the Fisher-Bowles lease. The work was confined to two veins, the so-called "Little" and "Middle" veins. The Little vein reportedly averaged less than a foot in width and its deepest workings were only 65 feet. Mr. Fisher stated that one hundred pounds of the ore yielded "210 pennyweight" of gold. The Middle vein probably averaged one and one-half to two feet in width, but the ore was not as rich as that of the Little vein.

Dr. William B. Gray, of Richmond, raised near the mine, wrote Dr. Pollard, Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture in 1881, that the average value of the ore obtained from the two veins during this 14-year period was \$100 per ton. In 1837, however, Mr. Fisher was quoted by an authority as allowing the average value of \$3.15 per hundred pounds, with a total recovery cost of thirty to thirty-five cents. At this time the lessees paid a royalty of 10% of net gold recovered. Mr. Hughes apparently confirmed receipt of \$13,000 to \$15,000 for his royalty share.

In 1848 the Fisher-Hughes Mine, as it was known (though locally it was called "the Red Mine"), changed hands. A new spirit entered Fluvanna County and its infant industry took on commercial overtones.

Commodore Robert Fielding Stockton (1795-1866), a daring visionary offspring of the important and wealthy Huguenot family of New Jersey, entered the local picture. Although he inherited his famous birthplace, "Morven," and 15,000 acres in North Carolina, and despite his military exploits in Algeria and in California where he gave his name to a town grateful that he drove the Mexican armies from Los Angeles, he centered his personal endeavors in Fluvanna County and began to mine gold. It is said that his holdings throughout Virginia and North Carolina were extensive and gold oriented.

Commodore Stockton was well known for his inventiveness and

developmental ability. His innovation of the screw propeller transformed the nation's fleet of "side-wheelers" and provided the more efficient propulsion method which is used on all vessels to this day. His improvement of guns on ships of the line gave the Navy a needed boost in firepower (even if the big *Peacemaker* did blow up with President Tyler and his cabinet on board ship!)

He turned this ability to mining, and in 1848 he bought the Fisher-Bowles Mine tract for \$10,000. He erected a four-stamp mill and opened several new veins, the largest being the "Big Sandstone." The big vein varied in width from three to six feet and reached a depth of 136 feet. Tunnelling commenced with "stoping," and a sizable enterprise began.

The Commodore was not one to confide his earnings to the public, but accounts of his income from the mine place it at possibly \$1,000,000 for the ensuing nine years. Although record of his work force and organization is scarce, it is almost certain that his expertise in techniques of mining came from imported labor. Some German miners and their families were hired, but it is likely that Stockton formed the nucleus of his seasoned workmen from the Cornish "Cousin Jacks" who, in retrospect, seemed almost eager to perform the dangerous and drudging task of recovering ore for a pittance. (Surface work was relegated to slaves in the early days of mining.)

The 1850 census listed his capital investment at \$75,000 and his employees at 40 in number; 38 men at an average monthly wage of \$12 and 2 women at \$7. He used 520 cords of firewood for his steam engines each year, worth \$676.

During this time the mine assumed a different name. The mineral "Tellurium" was thought discovered, described as a coating recovered along with the gold. Later analysis proved this erroneous, but the term had been adopted in the meantime, and the property was called "The Tellurium Mine."

Commodore Stockton expanded. He added two tracts in 1848 and 1849, bought from Bowles and Fisher, and in 1852 added two more for a total of 340 acres, lapping across the County line into Goochland. Stockton acquired an operating water-powered stamping mill, with dam, from Judge Bowles, and set up a camp from which he supervised his growing enterprise. (He also opened the Stockton Mine in Louisa County.) His activities held a fascination and flair that bred legends.

One of his workings, the elusive Stockton Tunnel, located somewhere on the upper Long Island Creek, has been searched for ever since 1913, when its ore was described (the last description we can find) by geologist Stephen Taber from information furnished by Herman Credner in 1869. The tunnel, 100 to 200 feet in length, was reached by several openings and ore was a very hard, sandy quartz, carrying free gold in minute particles. Likely, the tunnel is caved at the entrances by

now and will retain its secrets for all time!

Reviewing his lifestyle, one must conclude that during this period he regarded himself as a pioneer in a venture which not only would increase his wealth, but provide a power base in the nation's economy. Gold had not previously been a commodity of any extent in the United States, amounting to less than \$200,000 in the four years of the "Virginia Fever" of 1829-1833—with half of that amount mined in 1833.

Stockton concluded that his prospects in Fluvanna were certain of success and constructed a family residence, not so estate-like as his family manor in New Jersey, but comfortable and attractive. Using heart-of-pine lumber from the surrounding forest, with wooden pegs supplemented occasionally by shop-made nails, he built a typical rural home of the day: square, with gabled roof, four dormer windows, and porch with a wide front door. Mantels were handcarved and the interior decorated and furnished to suit his family's esthetic tastes.

The structure, situated near the County line, two and one-half miles southeast of Tabscott, resisted the weathering of time without serious deterioration for the next 100 years, until a destructive forest fire in 1936 left only charred chimneys. The Stockton residence was best remembered for its beautiful flowering landscaping and pristine maintenance.

Those in Fluvanna who have an inherited memory of Stockton's home, also tell of his mining exploits. Mr. Vest Payne confirmed that the Commodore's most persistent and formidable enemy in his mining effort was underground water. He related the attempt to end this ever-present hindrance by describing a "mile-long tunnel" Stockton dug to drain the mine shafts. The exact location of the tunnel is unknown, but the method is certainly one Stockton would have used. Such tunnels are common in the West, one being four miles long. Even with the water problem, however, mining in the three main shafts continued for nine years, until other concerns and national interests called the Commodore back to the North.

Several professional opinions are recorded attesting to the gold content of Tellurium ores. Essentially, the quartzite which forms the greater portion of the Big Sandstone vein is fine-grained, even-granular, and light gray to almost white when fresh, turning to light brownish-gray or pink on weathering. The rock has distinct schistosity (layering) parallel to bedding, and when examined appears to consist entirely of quartz. Fine scales of sericite are abundant enough to give a high luster. Under the microscope, the quartzite is composed essentially of interlocking quartz grains, less than 1 mm. in maximum diameter. Samples show different composition, some containing biotite and chlorite, garnet, feldspar, sericite, pyrite, leucoxene derived from ilmenite, and titanite.

Of the several veins worked, the "Middle" vein is most variable in width, conforming in strike and dip to the enclosing schists and at one point is cut by a vertical fault where the vein is displaced about two feet. Mineral composition is similar to the veinlets that constitute the chief gold-bearing portion of the Big Sandstone vein, but reports indicate that the Middle vein is the richer of the two. An average tailing sample yielded \$2.07 per ton at 1913 prices.

The "Little" vein, located near the Middle, is similar in character but narrower and even richer in gold. Yet another vein, little recognized, near the Big Sandstone, is about one foot in width and yielded free gold on panning.

Other mines in the immediate area were worked in early days at the same time Commodore Stockton was busy with his larger effort. To the southwest was the Scotia Mine and the "Hodges Vein." The Hodges is a bed of ferruginous quartzite cut by gold-bearing stringers with surface cuts and a 43-foot shaft which led to short tunnels dug northeast and southwest.

Passing southwest along the strike of the Tellurium vein system, old prospect holes occur at short intervals to the Byrd Creek, but while gold was found at a number of these places, no extensive work was done. Caved shafts and surface pits up to 40 feet in depth adjoin the Scotia tract.

Surface cuts made years ago traced the quartzite bed across the then Mosby, Fountain, and Cocke properties, and placer gravels were worked along the branches of the Big Byrd Creek. It is said that the Big Sandstone vein was prospected on the Fountain property in 1837 by George Fisher, and another vein, known as the Marks vein, was also opened and worked by the Fishers. Later, the adjacent "Bartlett" vein was discovered and the ore was carried to the Bowles Mill on Byrd Creek for crushing in a small wooden mill adjacent to the grist mill.

In short, everyone who owned land near the Tellurium Mine, or could get permission, prospected for gold. There were other mines north of the Tellurium which we will mention and which could be studied separately, keeping in mind that the general bearing of the vein system did not end in Fluvanna, but extended into Goochland, which has its own story to tell, and north into Louisa where mining also became profitable.

The Tellurium (Fisher-Bowles) Mine ceased production after over two decades when the Commodore returned home one evening from a journey to find that his mill had burned. With gold strikes in the West leading to large mining complexes, which siphoned off eastern labor and capital and generally removed interest in privately owned land of the East, he decided in August 1857 to sell and return to New Jersey.

There is no evidence that the new owners, William A. and William B.

Gray, Thomas Shepherd and Edwin Mallory worked the mine under the name "Shepherd, Gray and Company of the City of Fluvanna."

In 1876 Julius Rae of New York City leased the property, planning to use the "Rae Patent Washers" as an improvement on a ten-stamp mill. A joint stock company with a capital of \$40,000 was to place in effect a process known as "Rae's Patent Voltaic Process" of amalgamation to be paid for in stock, after trial. There is no record of production from this arrangement.

The Columbia Gold Mining Company of the City of Richmond purchased the mine and all appurtenances in 1877 and worked it sporadically until the turn of the century. The Argus Mining Corporation (which also purchased the Hughes Mine in the middle of the County) did a little work in 1909 and 1910, and W. S. McDonald of Washington, D. C., opened the mine in 1935 under a lease agreement lasting three years. Little, if any activity resulted, however, beyond cleaning out one or two shafts. The Columbia Gold Mining Company dissolved in 1951, and the mine now lies in private hands. For all intents and purposes no concerted and well-financed operation has been undertaken since Stockton's departure.

The shafts, mill site with concrete stamp bases (made with quartz gravel), dumps, surface cuts and prospecting pits dot a large area near the County line. The shafts are extremely dangerous, exposed to any person on foot in the forest, offering no warning of their presence in the rolling ground contour. Contemplating this Argonne landscape, one can but wonder at the incentive which drove Stockton and his neighbors and work crews to grapple with the mud, water and chunks of quartz, year after year, when their methods and equipment were inefficient and gold was worth such a fraction of what it is today.

## VII THE SCOTIA MINE

Colonel Joseph S. Perkins opened the Scotia Mine, following the Tellurium vein system southwest. In its early days when he owned and operated it, the mine was known as "The Perkins Mine." And although incline shafts and prospect holes still remain from work done prior to 1849, there is no record of productivity of that time. In February, 1910, the mine was sold to the Bank of Commerce of South Dakota, a 173½-acre tract chartered as the Scotia Gold Mine. It is situated seven miles northeast of Columbia and adjoins the Tellurium Mine, the character of its rock and vein structure being similar.

In 1910 a drain tunnel was driven 105 feet, cutting the "Big Sandstone Vein" near the portal, with two small stringers that were called the "Middle" and "Little Vein." A 67-foot vertical shaft cut the Big Sandstone vein near the bottom. The vein was exposed in a pit dug

in the outcrop 100 feet northwest of the vertical shaft. Here the quartzite bed shows a strike of N. 50 degrees E., a dip of 35 degrees S.E., and varies from 8 to 36 inches wide. It is cut by veinlets of massive white quartz carrying considerable kaolinized feldspar. The Scotia Mining Company reopened an old incline shaft sunk on the Middle vein. It is improbable that this vein is continuous with either of the stringers in the drain tunnel or with the Middle vein of the Tellurium Mine. The old Jennings tract adjoins the Scotia with its surface pits and shafts on the Tellurium veins, and the Hodges vein is near the southwestern corner of the Scotia.

The Scotia and nearby mining tracts (except the Tellurium) are now included among development properties of the General Commonwealth Corporation.

## VIII CASSEL'S MINE

Persistent workers mined gold on the old Payne farm located three miles southwest of Kent's Store. They removed a small amount of ore from several shafts and cross-cuts above the water line. Existing evidence includes a shaft 20 feet in diameter filled to within 20 feet of ground level; and two caved shafts of slightly smaller dimensions, and six or seven caved pits ranging from eight to 20 feet in diameter and depth. Cross-cuts and trenches are still evident, and piles of dirt and white quartz near the workings remind us of the labors of the early aspirants.

It is said one of the pits was sunk in a highly ferruginous quartzite bed eight feet or more thick. The dark brown quartzite is cut by quartz veinlets one or two inches wide which frequently contain plates of micaceous hematite.

## IX THE BOWLES MINE

By the beginning of the twentieth century the system of gold bearing veins running generally northeast-southwest in the most eastern section of Fluvanna had been identified superficially by mining activities, covering a distance of five miles, with almost continuous development of veins of the Tellurium mine for one mile. Most prominent among developments within this mile were the Scotia, Tellurium and Bowles Mines, with less sophisticated ventures of land owners inextricably mixed.

Acknowledging the inherent spirit of the Virginian of that day we can conclude that known mines probably reflect only a fraction of prospects actually undertaken. If a person possessed acreage within a



mile or so of a producing gold mine, he faced the quandary of whether to continue tilling the none too fertile soil or to take a flyer in irresistible adventure, even though the adventure wouldn't fill the corn crib and might leave him destitute during the coming winter. We can imagine life in some Fluvanna quarters in the 1830's may have been in a bit of a turmoil, with the men folks heading for the creek each morning with shovels instead of hitching up the mules for a day of plowing—cautioning the women and children, of course, to say nothing of their change in vocation.

In our century, hangers-on from the mining days still made a livelihood of sorts panning gold. They would pan enough to buy a parcel of groceries, then sit on the front porch and rock until necessity drove them back to the creeks.

Judge D. W. K. Bowles owned property in Fluvanna situated eight miles northeast of Columbia and adjacent to the Tellurium Mine on its northeast boundary. Judge Bowles was not one to be awed by the thought of owning gold. His name figures in a number of enterprises of the area. The ruins of his homeplace, almost a village, called Bowlesville on the old Yanceyville Road, illustrate the extensiveness of his activities and interests, as does his service as a judge. His partnership in the lease of the Tellurium Mine, from 1834 to 1838, known as the Fisher-Bowles Mine, was only one of his interests.

He traced the vein system on his property and opened a shaft which started on an outcrop of the Big Sandstone vein and went about 100 feet on the dip of the vein. Fifty feet from the "collar" he drove a cross-cut southeast to connect with a vertical shaft at a point about 40 feet below the surface. The vertical shaft went to a depth of about 72 feet, and after striking the Little vein continued for 45 feet along the dip. According to Stephen Taber, geologist author of "The Geology of the Gold Belt in the James River Basin," the shafts had partly filled with water in 1910 and all the workings were inaccessible. Data of original workings were furnished by a Mr. Ferris, in charge of the property at that time.

The character of the Bowles Mine veins and the structure of the wall rock are the same as the Tellurium. Typical of the Big Sandstone vein wherever it is observed, one finds a quartzite bed some six feet thick cut by quartz veinlets up to 14 inches or more in width, composed essentially of white to translucent, coarsely crystalline quartz, and kaolinized feldspar. Native gold occurs in small grains and scales that may usually be detected on panning the crushed ore. In a piece of vein quartz, obtained within six feet of the surface, Mr. Taber found gold in small flakes about 9.25 mm. in diameter. At greater depth much of the gold is probably contained in pyrite.

Unfortunately, Judge Bowles did not publish a description of his activities or his earnings, or the disposition of refined gold.

## X THE GOLD HILL VEIN SYSTEM

Situated about two miles southeast of Kents Store and extending for over a mile, the Gold Hill vein system, consisting of a series of small veins, was developed at several places on the Bowles, Shaw and McGloam properties, but all the work is said to be superficial. The veins differ from other veins of the district in several important characteristics, being located in an area of fine-grained granite. No other gold-bearing veins have been found locally in granite. The veins contain coarsely crystalline pyrite, frequently occurring in large cubical shapes.

### The McGloam Mine

The old McGloam Mine, located half a mile north of the Tellurium, joins the Bowles property on the east. A description of 60 years ago states the mine had two shafts, three hundred yards apart, one vertical and the other on a flat incline, and both filled with water. The work exposed a vein, one to two feet wide, in the mouth of the incline shaft with a strike of N. 70 degrees E. and a dip of 30 degrees to the S.E. Fine-grained granite, a little hornblende schist, and considerable vein quartz were found on the dump. A little free gold was detected by panning and a thin section examined under the microscope contained a veinlet of quartz three milimeters wide and enclosed by granite.

### The Shaw Mine (Black Field Vein)

The Shaw tract, located northeast of the Tellurium and northeast of the Bowles tract, contains several shallow caved shafts close to a small branch passing through the property. The vein is said to have a strike of N. 80 degrees E. Granite outcroppings occur at several places.

### Gold Hill Bowles Mine

Several pits and small shafts were sunk on the northern end of the Bowles property on the Black Field vein, contiguous with the Shaw vein. An exposed vein in one 30 foot shaft varies from one foot to a fraction of an inch and may be four feet wide in places. This vein apparently derives from another system since it varies in strike and dip from the Shaw vein. A specimen found contained grains of gold two milimeters in diameter.

About five hundred yards south another strike conformation contains a vein about one foot in width and almost vertical in dip. Between this point and the McGloam vein are numerous openings, the greatest amount of early development evidently done at a point where the Gold Hill vein is said to intersect the "Cross" vein, but no records exist. The Missouri-Virginia Mining and Milling Company leased mineral rights in 1896 to a promising 31-acre tract adjoining the Marks, Conway and Gold Hill Mining Company properties, but results are not available.

## XI

### THE HUGHES MINE

Briefly and poetically known as the "Eldorado Mine," the Hughes Mine has a history of varied ownership and lease. Originally worked in 1836 to an unknown extent, Mr. Jesse Hughes and his wife Nurelly leased the mine in August 1837 to Messrs. Cohen, Clarke, Hone, and Payne for \$1 plus one-seventh of surface gold and one-tenth of vein gold. The lease agreed that Mr. Hughes was not to be "interrupted in his usual farming operation." The mine comprised a tract of 274 acres, about two miles northeast of Fork Union.

In 1876 Mr. Robert B. Hughes, son of Jesse, leased the mine rights to Mr. L. D. Sawtell and Mr. F. A. Fleming. Ten years later, the same Mr. Hughes leased the mine to a Mr. Hovey of Philadelphia. That year, Mr. Hovey (apparently an agent) sold for \$1 his unexpired two-year lease to The Long Island Consolidated Gold Mining Company of Virginia (a firm whose very name smacks of greatness—but whose interest waned within two years)!

In 1889 Messrs. Reeves and Craig of Philadelphia leased the property with "existing Mill and Boiler houses." These operators purchased the property in 1900 and continued mining until 1905, selling at that time to the Hughes Gold Mining and Milling Company of New York, which constructed the model mill near the right-of-way of the new Airline Railway (described on page 14). Reeves and Craig were still the principal stockholders in the Company when company funds, and the payroll, disappeared about 1906.

Work was superficial in the early days, but around the turn of the century owners sunk a producing shaft 115 feet deep. According to Mr. William Bugbee, stockholder, company secretary and general manager, underground development concentrated on three veins, two of which strike in a northeast-southwest direction parallel to the country rock, while the third, running in an eastward direction, cuts across the rock formations and intersects one of the other veins.

Shaft number one was sunk to 40 feet on a vein and then driven 140 feet along the vein, with over 50 feet stoped and milled. Gross value of \$9 per ton was attributed to the ore. Shaft number two went to 110 feet on another vein with drifts driven at depths of 60 and 110 feet. Second vein stoping provided ore at \$20 per ton, with the vein one and one-half feet in width. The third vein, 100 feet distant, developed for 230 feet, varied one to four feet in width, and provided ore valued at \$13 per ton.

Ore found on the surface during geologic examination early in the twentieth century was chiefly vein quartz, varying from coarsely crystalline to saccharoidal in texture and in places containing much pyrite.

The Argus Gold Mining Corporation bought in 1910 substantially all machinery and merchandise of the former company for \$1,313.23. What was done with it, we don't know.

Following another sale in 1915, the old Hughes tract and mine was bought in 1942 by Mr. Walter Gordon Melton, a sanguine collector of antiques whose father, William, was employed at the Hughes mill in 1906 when it shut down. He states that of the 75 men employed, most earned 10¢ per hour, or \$1 per day, and received the princely accumulation of this figure twice a year. Mr. Melton is singularly unimpressed by the potential of the mine he owns, stating that he has pushed upwards of fifty wrecked automobiles into one of the largest shafts.

A local story tells of the fine house on the property which some folk claim led to the demise of the mine. According to the story, the richest veins of the mine extended under the house and "the lady of the manor" so rebelled at the idea of tunnels under her house that work ceased!

Today numerous caved and partially filled shafts, pits and surface cuts, and building foundations, attest to the grand plans of the succession of owners. Pier foundation footings still march in tandem through the trees about twelve feet apart, relics of the quarter-mile conveyor which carried ore to the mill and returned the tailings to the dump.

## XII THE SNEAD MINE

Mr. William Snead lived about a mile and one-half north of Fork Union, and in February, 1831 he leased the "privilege of searching, cutting, washing, excavating and mining" for gold on his property to the Rivanna Exploring and Mining Company. Mr. Charles Cocke and Mr. John Bowles Perkins composed the company. Terms were typical of the day: Mr. Snead to receive one-tenth of vein gold recovered and one-fourth of placer gold. Work had to commence within six months.

The Company renewed the lease in 1833 with Mr. William Morton and Mr. Silas Bigelow replacing Mr. Perkins. An evident disillusion with progress possibly caused Mr. Perkin's withdrawal, and they revised the one-tenth arrangement to a flat payment of \$150 per year to Mr. Snead. The new lease remained effective until April, 1848.

According to early reports, the mine did not actually become active until 1838, when it operated for only nine months, yielding \$6,000. The early workers treated the ore in a primitive stamp mill operated by water power, with much gold lost in the tailings. Mining continued to some degree until 1850. The vein under excavation was opened by a shaft 25 feet deep, with several open cuts along the outcrop, and a tunnel. A group attempted to reopen the mine after the Civil War and in 1881 tried

the chlorination process of gold separation.

In July, 1888, the *Columbia Bulletin* announced sale of "The Snead Gold Mine" property, owing to the death of Mr. E. W. Wilson, late owner. Mill and machinery, mining tools and fixtures and the 374-acre farm were included in the sale. The mill, by this time, included stamp equipment and a sixteen-horsepower boiler installed for pumping water from shafts.

The ore vein of the Snead Mine is described as three to six feet wide and running in a northeast-southwest direction with a dip of 65 degrees to the east. It consists of hard white quartz, "containing sulphurets of iron, copper, lead, and zinc, and also oxide of iron, phosphate of lead, carbonate of copper, and free gold."

Survey of the mine today finds many caved shafts varying from 15 to 35 feet across and up to 25 feet deep, with many smaller pit depressions and surface cuts. Remains of the mill foundations rest about 100 feet from the stream which provided power for the original mill.

The Snead and Hughes Gold Mines were decided points of interest during their heyday. The Day Book of Mr. Gideon Underhill, who lived very near the Hughes Mines, records, beginning in 1881, that he and his son frequently took guests to both the Hughes Mine and to Mr. Wilson's at the Snead Mine, and how his guests "prospected for gold in Kinney Branch."

### XIII THE PAGE MINE

Record of the early ownership of the Page Mine on Long Island Creek has not been found. Mrs. Lucy Alice (Page) Yancey, who now resides on Route 608 near the site of Yancey's Store, which she and her late husband operated, provides us with an unusual bridging of time back to the actual operation of the mine. Following the Civil War her father, John Benjamin Page, constructed the rugged little log cabin now standing on Route 601 where she was born.

Mrs. Yancey visited the "East Tunnel" as a girl with her mother lighting the way with a lantern. "Three people could walk abreast and a tall man could walk without stooping," she says. She recalls the caving of the entrance to the east tunnel and the erosion of a narrow inlet in the center section which her brothers used as an entrance for exploration. She also visited a tunnel on the west side of the creek, and she remembers an old shaft, quite deep, nearer the cabin on the hill, which the family dogs fell into when they forgot to be careful, causing a great uproar. No doubt, Mrs. Yancey has an appreciation of her mother's trials, raising children near a mine.

The veins of the Page Mine were first mined in 1856, and an eight-

stamp mill was built to crush the ores. According to the geologist Credner, after his visit in 1865, the ore was taken from two quartz veins carrying fine-grained galena and gold, by several tunnels and shafts. The mill was in ruins at that time.

In 1886 Mr. Erastus F. Hovey (of Hughes Mine connection) leased all that land known as the "Long Island Gold Mine" for the purpose of exploring further. As with the Hughes Mine, Mr. Hovey promptly disposed of his lease to the "Long Island Consolidated Gold and Mining Company" which did no work of consequence. Mr. William Bugbee (also of the Hughes Mine) extracted ore at the Page about 1902 on a share basis until capital became a problem.

By 1911 the only accessible opening was a tunnel about 20 feet long running under the hill on the west side of the creek, and it still exists. The east tunnel is barely discernable, but pits and quartz dumps abound. Interesting, also, is the eastern portion of the old mill dam which stands as solidly as it did when new.

Again, we find a mine which originally provided gold at a profit, abandoned almost since its beginning.

### Long Island Creek

The Long Island Creek area, including the branches to the north, is lined with quartz outcroppings and schistose bedrock and was prospected and mined superficially. It was in one of the more precipitous creek banks that Commodore Stockton drove his "phantom" tunnel while prospectors covered creek flats and hilltops with shallow pits and quartz piles. Here, too, the Old Dominion Slate Company worked in more recent years.

Examples of prospecting work can be seen on Long Island Farm near Route 608, once the property of John Henry Yancey, Mrs. Alice Yancey's father-in law. Examination of the creek area discloses a number of caved shafts suitably located for "gold washing." Mrs. Yancey recalls that she saw women wash clothes in one very deep and ominous pit called "Jerdon's Hole."

An 1837 contract between James A. Appleberry and Thomas Modena required Mr. Modena to "search vigorously for gold" along the west side of Long Island Creek, probably one of the first disciplined efforts in this region and typical of the ventures of that time.

Large acreage leases continued throughout the last century. One company leased over 3000 acres in 1897, reaching from the Central Plains area to the James River. And in this century, tunnels dug on Greenwood Plantation near Stage Junction along Route 605, are collapsing, giving mute evidence to men's plans and hardships long since expired.

Looking to the past with its many mining starts — some failures, some successes — we cannot but recall Professor Overman's prediction, that the area's gold will be "more sure and lasting" than any other in the country. If he is vindicated, Fluvanna may yet resolve its paradox and give up its secrets. Somehow, this would be a tribute to the men and families of the past who struggled against great odds in search of their "King's Ransom."

\* \* \* \* \*

Thanks to:

Palmer Sweet, Virginia Division of Mineral Resources, who knows gold, and to Minnie Lee McGehee, who knows Fluvanna.

Southward

John D. Horn

March, 1975

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The Fluvanna Historical Society was founded in 1964 to collect and preserve manuscripts and other documents relating to the history of Fluvanna County in Virginia; to maintain the Old Stone Jail at the county seat, Palmyra, as a museum where antiques of the county may be exhibited; and to encourage historical research.

Meetings of the Society are held two times a year. Annual dues are: Single Membership, \$5.00; Family Membership, \$7.00; and Contributing Membership, \$10.00. A life membership is \$100. A bulletin is published twice a year, distributed to members free of charge. Copies can be purchased for \$2.00 single copy; \$3.00 double copy. Readers are requested to contribute any information of historical interest they may have or may be able to obtain. The Society will endeavor to publish as much of this information as may be possible.

All communications should be addressed to: Mrs. Henry C. McGehee, Chairman of Publications, Fluvanna County Historical Society, Box 132, Palmyra, Virginia.





*The Bulletin of the*  
**FLUVANNA COUNTY**  
**Historical Society**

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October 1975

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**COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA**

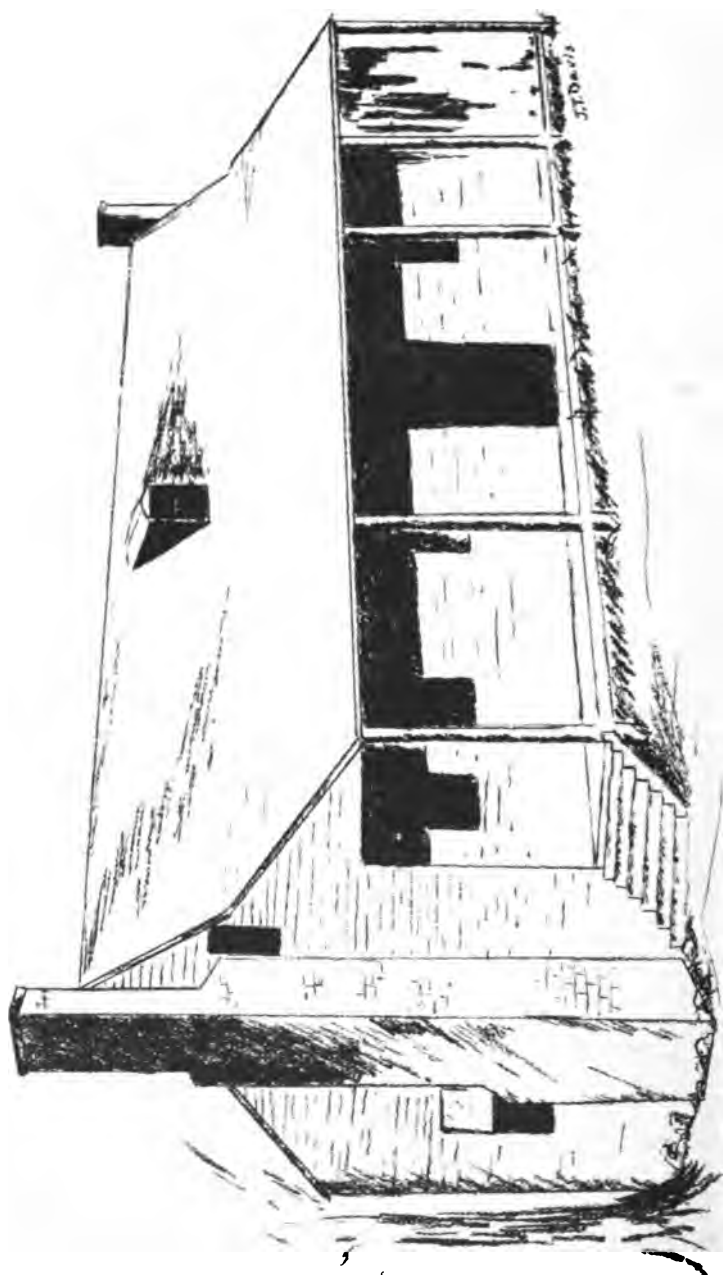
*Built in 1830*



# **APPOINTMENT WITH NOSTALGIA**

## **A Historical Sketch of the Village of Fork Union, Virginia**

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*A. Seay House*

# **APPOINTMENT WITH NOSTALGIA**

## **A Historical Sketch of the Village of Fork Union, Virginia**

### **I FOREWORD**

The village community of Fork Union, Virginia, is 151 years of age as this is written. In many particulars it is unique. According to the United States Postal Service, there is no other post office in the nation bearing this name; and the National Geographic Society has been unable to find the name "Fork Union" anywhere else on the map of North America.

At a time when noise pollution — confrontation, altercation, unrest, and disarray of indescribable variety — appears rampant throughout the land, Fork Union is a veritable oasis of orderliness, neatness, quiet, and peace. Its basic ambience is, and always has been, that of a wholesome association of citizens, embracing churches and schools, long-established and much-loved institutions which have been eminently successful in their respective functions down through the years. Spiritual and intellectual growth of outstanding maturity have become distinct presences here, in consequence.

Elsewhere generational turmoil and dissolution may create men of straw, wandering a wasteland of disbelief and blighted expectations; elsewhere some individuals may be blown like tumbleweeds from inconsequential births to insignificant deaths, full of sound and sullenness, signifying nothing. But in this tiny village where there is a sense of lengthy historical associations and continuity, where purposefulness of lifestyle among residents is proudly and earnestly maintained, individual existence seems both secure and significant.

A town's history is best reflected in its people. Their desire to achieve, their determination to endure, and the obstacles they overcome to reach their goals give a compelling narrative as to what a place really is. The people of Fork Union have been determined "to go about doing good," both for themselves and their children. They established around a country church a quiet little community, at first almost hidden within densely wooded Central Virginia; and they labored to make it a decent, healthful, attractive place. It offers to all residents an unhurried, substantial, and satisfying way of life. Through the years Fork Union citizens, each adding his own contributions to village personality, have made it a better place than they knew.

It is, of course, presumptuous to attempt to write the history of any community, large or small. There are too many variables in the human

condition, too many specifics in the historical continuum, which militate against thoroughness and accuracy in the absolute sense. Thus, this bulletin of the Fluvanna County Historical Society is intended to be a historical sketch only — not the last word in research or exposition — concerning a very special, truly interesting, and oddly endearing rural village, lying picturesquely in the rolling Fluvannian countryside of Piedmont Virginia, hard by some of the most historical spots in America.

This writer, not a Fork Union native, will feel his efforts have been successful if those of Fork Union birth, wherever they may be living in the world, both recognize the following historical portrait of their hometown and consider it has conformed reasonably well with reality. To have captured in words the essential personality of this genuinely appealing village will be to have accomplished a primary goal set when writing was begun.

— Lynwood Hall Halliburton  
Major  
Fork Union Military Academy

Raleigh, North Carolina  
22 July 1975



*Fork Union Baptist Church*

## II

### INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Those unfamiliar with the village of Fork Union characteristically ask at least three questions when they first hear its name: "Where is it located? How did it acquire such an unusual name? What is of interest there?" One of the purposes of this introductory material is to answer these questions.

#### Location

The very small, unincorporated village of Fork Union, seat since the autumn of 1898 of the institution which is today called Fork Union Military Academy, is located in the southeastern corner of Fluvanna County, one of Virginia's many historic areas. Fork Union is truly in the heart of the Commonwealth of Virginia, only thirty-two miles from its exact geographical center at Mount Rush in adjacent Buckingham County.

The roads of today, United States Highway #15 (the James Madison Highway) and Virginia Highway #6, effect a junction in the village at a point where the Old Brick Meeting House (today's Fork Union Baptist Church) was constructed in 1824 and still stands, together with modern additions, in its distinguished, mellow old age. Forty-nine miles to the east lies the capital city of Richmond, and the university center of Charlottesville may be reached approximately thirty miles to the northwest. There is an aura strongly reminiscent of an English rural town at Fork Union; this is particularly so in the sense that community residences and other buildings as well — like children around a loving and protective parent — cluster closely about the handsome old Baptist church, architecturally similar, in its original 1824 lines at least, to many Anglican structures. Such propinquity tends to emphasize the spiritual aspect of man as the visitor first enters Fork Union.

#### Population

The population of Fork Union is highly inconstant, rising and falling during the space of a year as Fork Union Military Academy opens and closes its sessions. Permanent residents within the village limits number less than 300 people, according to knowledgeable estimate. Many individuals living along roads stretching in a number of directions out of Fork Union are patrons of the Fork Union Post Office and consider the village their home, despite the fact they do not reside — technically speaking — within generally recognized village limits.

The following report by the postmaster at Fork Union as of September 27, 1974 presents a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the village's population:



Post Office boxes rented .....	225
Patrons served by Post Office boxes .....	611
General delivery patrons served .....	23
Rural route boxes served .....	87
Patrons using rural route boxes .....	305
Fork Union Military Academy cadets served (excluding day students) .....	591
Total patrons served by the Fork Union Post Office .....	1,530

These figures are approximate except for those relating to post office boxes rented, rural route boxes in service, and Academy cadets served. Since the total population of Fluvanna County's 285 square mile land area was only 7,621 according to the 1970 census (8,100 by estimate in 1975), Fork Union — certainly quite small by standards in effect elsewhere — is, paradoxically, one of the larger inhabited places in Fluvanna.

### Origin of Name

All the land lying between the James and Rivanna Rivers — and stretching westward from their confluence at Columbia, Virginia, to a rather vaguely defined point "near the mountains" — forms a geographical peculiarity referred to for more than two centuries as "The Fork," and lies almost wholly within the boundaries of Fluvanna County as constituted in 1777.

The village's location within "The Fork" has contributed significantly to its unusual name. Since the first house of worship in this area was called "The Fork Church,"\* and since a union meeting house of worship for Baptists, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians was erected in 1824 well within "The Fork," the name "Fork Union" gradually evolved for the village. Another theory about the genesis of the name involves the roads. The meeting house was built on the well-traveled River Road; and in time the old Bryant Ford Road was moved and a main road, running north-south, formed a junction here. With a union house of worship standing at the intersection of and inside the fork created by two main roads, the name "Fork Union" almost inevitably suggested itself for the community. Both of these theses are intellectually pleasing, historically tenable, and quite unprovable. One may, it appears, choose the explanation he prefers.

### Old Homes

Fork Union became noted for its numerous and beautiful old

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\*Old Fork Church first appears in county records in 1772. It stood near today's Central Plains and was later called "Fork Meeting House."

Victorian homes, as well as those of earlier vintage, which lined its streets and were also found in areas beyond village limits. These houses were invariably quite large, set a distance back from streets or roads to allow for expansive lawns, and surrounded by trees, shrubs, and flower gardens. They exuded the special atmosphere attached to the lovely word "home," and symbolized solid comfort, security, and permanence.

Some Fork Union homes were erected prior to the beginning of the Civil War; several, much earlier. A few examples of those still standing are Mrs. Kate Armstrong's house on Gilnockie Farm, believed to have been the home of Joseph Woolling, early patentee; Oakley, the W. O. Snead home, which contains certain rooms that are very old; and Winnsville, home of Mrs. P. J. Winn, built between 1830 and 1850. There are certainly others, but exact dates for their construction are almost impossible to ascertain now.

Homes of this type are not nearly so numerous as they once were; many were victims to the attrition of time, and others were razed to make room for contemporary structures. It is good that a few remain, carefully and lovingly cared for by their owners. They speak nostalgically of a time now disappeared when life was lived at a less phrenetic pace, when life was a melody played in more peaceful tempo.

Many homes were constructed at the turn of the century by individuals who wanted to help the fledgling Fork Union Academy, providing both room and board to as many of its students as possible during a period when the Academy had no barracks or faculty residences. At least two of the old homes catered exclusively to women students who attended Fork Union Military Academy from 1898 until the spring of 1912.

During the long, lazy summer seasons when the surrounding mountain-girt countryside was particularly beautiful and appealing to city dwellers, rooms occupied in winter by students were rented to vacationers from Richmond and other places. In short, Fork Union developed a reputation as a resort, as well as that of an educational center, and local residents were able to augment their income.

One of the interesting facts about these elderly dowagers in masquerade as houses, most having known their debut at the turn of the century, is that — appropriately, it seems — they all had names. Of course, the settlers brought the custom of naming their homes from England; the most reliable way to specify the location of a home was by its unique name, and apparently the system worked admirably. How names were chosen would prove a study of some interest. Generally speaking, an effort was always made — for obvious reasons — not to duplicate a name in use elsewhere in the neighborhood. Some names were inherited; others were decided upon in a kind of family caucus.

According to legend apparently based largely on truth, names for

Fork Union homes were frequently suggested — when asked for — by Elizabeth Herndon Hatcher (later Mrs. Henry Winn Sadler), highly educated and remarkably literate daughter of Dr. William E. Hatcher. Mrs. Sadler, an early Academy instructor, was especially enamored of British literature, a practicing anglophile of considerable enthusiasm.

Perhaps this accounts for the fact that so many Fork Union homes possess English names. Early in the century Fork Union Military Academy issued a list of homes which housed Academy students. This list shows the variety of place names used and their consistently English character:

Rosslyn .....	Mr. W. L. Seay
Ardmore .....	Mr. W. Frank Snead
Stirling .....	Mr. George W. Bashaw
Marlboro .....	Mrs. Julia S. Snead
Arrington .....	Mrs. Ella S. Thomas
Cumnor .....	Mrs. Marshall Thomas
Windsor .....	Miss Lucy O. Snead
Melrose .....	Mr. William J. Weaver
Devon Cottage .....	Mr. E. Bernard Weaver
The Old Homestead (formerly Rose Hill) .	Captain C. G. Snead
Whitehall .....	Mr. C. B. Wood
Haverford .....	Mr. W. C. Petty
Aberdeen .....	Mr. E. L. Pettit
Careby Hall .....	Dr. and Mrs. W. E. Hatcher

Other Fork Union names include Woodcrest, Corinth Hill, Brides Hill, and Sunnyside; and plantation names in the district include Carysbrook, White Rock, Point of Fork, Glen Arvon, Spring Garden, the Bremono homes, and others. A detailed study of these designations can reveal, in nuances often quite specific, something of the personalities, aspirations, and culture of the citizenry.

### General Education

As one reads old diaries, tattered day books, yellowed manuscripts, articles clipped from newspapers, and rare copies of aged publications written by early Fluvanna residents, he is especially impressed that Fork Union citizens have been notably consistent in their commitment to the importance of education, in their abiding love for it. Long before a village of Fork Union existed, at least some local residents sponsored and maintained educational efforts that might be designated “tutorial schools” for their children. Various individuals in the locality who possessed better than average academic backgrounds, as well as men and women from the Virginia Tidewater and some northern cities, were employed to “hold school” in one or more homes. Families contributed financially, as they were able and according to the number of children

they wished to educate, to pay the teachers. Reading, ciphering, spelling, and writing were taught.

All education was completely private until approximately 1810, the date generally agreed upon for the appearance of "old field schools," so-called because they were nearly always found in abandoned fields. Families who desired and could afford higher levels of instruction for their children sent them away to chartered "classical" schools or academies. Those who could not afford this luxury paid the seven to ten dollars per year fee asked by the field schools. The furnishings of these log schools were of the rudest kind, discipline was severe; and the atmosphere, psychological and physical, was most intimidating, most uncomfortable.

Martin B. Shepherd in his *Autobiography* had some cogent, caustic remarks to make about old field schools of the Fork Union area:

It may not be unprofitable to refer more particularly to the character of the schools within my reach (in October, 1815). They were emphatically "old field schools." The teachers were mostly old men whose chief recommendation was that they could write a pretty fair hand, set out a showy ciphering book for their pupils (at which most of their time was employed), and solve puzzling questions in arithmetic. I confess I have seldom witnessed evidences of much skill in these branches, in the results of their teaching. As teachers of reading I consider they were woefully deficient having rarely, if ever, seen one made a good reader by them. These "old field teachers" too were mostly men of intemperate habits, and as to morals, manners, and general intelligence, furnished a very poor model for the imitation of their pupils. They oftentimes resorted to the profession from sheer necessity to keep themselves and family from starving, and in too many cases, they were patronized because they taught at low rates, say twenty to forty shillings per scholar for a session of twelve months.

Classical schools (i.e., traditional, authoritative, humanistic) appeared in the Fork Union neighborhood after 1850. The first boarding school of this type was opened by the Reverend James H. Brooks at Bremono Recess in January, 1853 under the patronage of General John H. Cocke.\* Such schools were unchartered and not

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\*A Broadside in the Alderman Library, dated 1820, describes the "Bremono Seminary" in detail. The Bremono Seminary was located on the home plantation of Gen. Cocke and was open to boarding and day students. It was under the direction of a Board of Visitors and George Richardson, Principal.

In the *Churches of Fluvanna County, Virginia*, compiled by the Rev. Jerry L. Holloway, 1966, p. 24, there appears: "In 1851 Gen. Cocke employed John A. Broadbudd to teach a boys' school in his home."

"recognized" by any accrediting authority, but they enjoyed a substantial following among those who could afford them. Other children continued to attend field schools. (Fork Union Academy, originally a classical school having no military features, was chartered in late 1898.)

It is believed that the first public school in Fork Union, usually referred to as an academy, was opened in November, 1881, eleven years after public education was inaugurated on the elementary level in Virginia in 1870. The extant diary of Gidney (Gideon) Underhill, a prominent local farmer, advises us of this quite specifically; there are hints to this effect in other sources. The school had only two rooms and two teachers and was located in a rambling frame building, the Masonic Hall. (Land for this building was sold to the Masons in 1875 by Austin Seay, Jr. and the building completed in 1881.) After many, many years of use, this structure was razed and a new Masonic Hall built on the same site in 1952.

Thoroughly reliable dates are difficult to find regarding Fork Union public schools in their earliest years. It appears that the Fork Union School continued in the old Masonic Hall until at least 1910. The Virginia General Assembly passed the Mann High School Act in 1906 "to establish and maintain a system of public high schools and appropriate money therefor," and several were completed in Fluvanna by 1914.

The Fork Union High School, as far as can be learned, was a modest structure erected about 1910 on the west bank of Judy Creek, and it eventually accommodated also an elementary department of 62 scholars which moved from the Masonic Hall. The school was popularly called "Judy Creek School" by most people.

The Fork Union High School that stood beside Judy Creek and is remembered by most folk was a two-story building of ten rooms and housed all eleven grades. In 1931 a second building of three rooms was erected beside the old one. This second structure stood alone after the other was razed, ghostly and woebegone until this year, when the Rescue Squad took it over and brought it back to an active life.

In 1934 the high school pupils were withdrawn from Judy Creek when the Fluvanna County High School at Carysbrook consolidated all high schools for the white population of the county. Of course, efforts to close these local high schools were vigorously fought as a matter of local pride. The Judy Creek site was finally abandoned in 1941 when the current Fork Union District Elementary School was constructed on United States Highway #15, north of the village.

### Private Institutions and Advanced Education

Two privately-owned institutions of advanced learning have proved extraordinarily significant factors in village cultural development. One of them, Fluvanna Female Institute, was a casualty of post Civil War economic depression; the other, Fork Union Military Academy, is still strong today in the "groves of academe" after 76 years of uninterrupted existence.

The Fluvanna Female Institute, which began its first session in October, 1855, was founded by the Reverend Poindexter Smith Henson, a great Baptist minister and renowned public speaker, who bought the necessary property, erected the required buildings, and served from 1855 to 1860 as first principal. When he answered a call to serve as pastor of Broad Street Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a post he occupied from 1860 to 1867, he turned Fluvanna Institute over to his younger brother, the Reverend John Waller Henson. J. W. Henson was also a Baptist minister and served as second principal until 1868. Both were sons of John Henson of Corinth Hill, on Fork Union's western edge.

The Reverend P. S. Henson frequently remarked that he founded Fluvanna Institute as a personal educational arm of Fluvanna Baptist Church of which he was pastor (1855-1860). The Institute was located two miles west of Fork Union at Winnsville, the site of an old tavern for the stagecoaches on the River Road which became Route #6. Today one would state that the Institute stood on Route #671 at the southeast corner of its junction with Route #612.

An Institute *Catalogue* of 1859 makes the following observations about the physical campus:

The buildings present an attractive front (facing River Road), 144 feet in length, and contain accommodations for 60 students, together with the faculty. The main building (of brick construction) contains, besides recitation rooms and dormitories, a dining room 50 feet in length, and a chapel 40 feet square. The whole building is admirably heated by a spiral wood furnace, introduced by Geo. Starret of Richmond; and careful provision is made for the complete ventilation of every apartment.

Separate buildings — kitchen, servants' quarters, and others — stood behind the main building, and some structures were located across the road.

The Institute, granted a charter around 1857 by the Virginia Legislature, was empowered to award diplomas and confer degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts. Commencements, held on the first Wednesday in July, were accompanied by debates and literary presentations (sponsored by the Zenobian Literary Society), a musical soiree, a baccalaureate sermon, and other events.

Life at Fluvanna Institute was severe, somewhat like that of a convent in terms of restrictions, completely dedicated to academic pursuits under three basic curricula: preparatory, collegiate, and university. Young ladies were not allowed "to receive the attentions of young gentlemen, to carry on clandestine correspondence with anyone, or to visit in the neighborhood or elsewhere" while the Institute was in session. In addition, "no young lady will be allowed to remain in the Institution who is habitually idle, or intractable, or unladylike in her deportment, lest by her example others should be contaminated."

The Institute, while under the leadership of the Brothers Henson and its third and last principal, the Reverend James A. Munday (1868-1870), was a most successful educational venture and of lasting benefit and authority in the lives of many young women of rural Virginia. The final session was that of 1869-1870, according to material now in the archives of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society at Richmond. However, the school had been closed for brief intervals for various reasons associated with the Civil War. Economic depression alone was the cause of the demise of Fluvanna Female Institute; in terms of its effectiveness and efficiency in education for women, it might well have functioned with much approval and support to the present day.

Fork Union Military Academy has for 76 years served faithfully and well the young people of Virginia and many other states, in addition to those from a large number of foreign countries. It has broadened the intellectual and aesthetic horizons of thousands and contributed in terms immeasurable to the growth of a patriotic, altruistic citizenry. One cannot escape feelings of admiration, of elation, as he visits the beautiful Academy campus covering the slopes and apex of a gentle hill and observes nearly six hundred young men busily and seriously involved in the higher development of "body, mind, and spirit." The people of Fork Union are proud of this nationally-respected school, currently operating within an annual budget of two million dollars, approximately. Its history is inextricably entwined with that of the village itself.

Fork Union Academy, the predecessor of Fork Union Military Academy, was founded on September 30, 1898 at a meeting held in Careby Hall, Fork Union summer home of Dr. W. E. Hatcher. Dr. Hatcher was a Virginia Baptist, widely recognized as one of the greatest, most charismatic clergymen of his time. He and nine Fork Union citizens of modest means (eight men and two women) organized a Board of Guarantors, contributing as individual financial ability would allow to a general fund to establish a classical Academy, especially and primarily designed for village boys and girls.

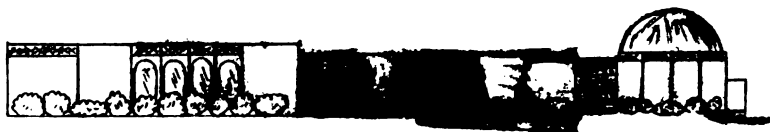
On October 15, 1898 the new school opened with nineteen students, under the principalship of Julian Bowie Martin of Upper Zion, Caroline County, Virginia. Classes met at Cumnor, a rented village house. Mrs.

W. P. Snead, the former Julia Moore Seay, gave seventeen acres of land as a campus for the fledgling academy between 1900 and 1902 — land which had been in her family's estate and never sold since George II of England granted it to Abraham Seay II in 1745.

In 1902 the Academy became a military school; and under the presidency of Dr. Hatcher, despite numerous difficulties and setbacks, it remained a strong institution. After Dr. Hatcher's death in 1912, the school was given to the Baptists of Virginia and has remained associated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia. The Academy phased out its offerings to women students as of the 1911-1912 academic year; a lively, fast-growing Junior School was founded in 1930.

Seven remarkable and dedicated men have presided over the Academy's development during 76 years: W. E. Hatcher, E. B. Hatcher, C. E. Crosland, N. J. Perkins, J. J. Wicker, J. C. Wicker, and K. T. Whitescarver. Each has given liberally in time, energy, and earnest endeavor so that the institution has become more firmly established, more devoted to the enhancement of man's estate, particularly in the educational and spiritual spheres.

As this is written, about 5,000 individuals have graduated from Fork Union Military Academy since diplomas were first issued in 1907, and large numbers have distinguished themselves in innumerable areas of service. In the village, of the village, and for the village, the Academy was founded; it remains so oriented, serving a much larger constituency as well.



*The J. Caldwell Wicker Science Building*



### **III BEGINNINGS**

#### **The Monacan Indians**

The earliest inhabitants of the section of Virginia in which Fork Union is located, about which we know anything at all, were the Monacan Indians. In truth, not very much has been learned about them; for unlike the Powhatans, for example, they did not come into sufficiently close contact with settlers for the latter to record any data of substance about them.

Nearly three centuries have come and gone since the Monacans, a loose Confederacy of approximately five tribes, last roamed and lived their free, picturesque, sometimes barbaric lives among the forests and streams of present-day Fluvanna. Not a single one of their number survives in our locality, but large numbers of artifacts of tremendous variety have been found: arrowheads in infinite shapes and of many materials, milling stones and bowls, moccasin stones, stone knives, and projectiles of every kind imaginable. These memorabilia speak of a proud, vigorous, and busy people, now totally extinct.

Mrs. W. E. Hatcher wrote that she and Dr. Hatcher maintained a small museum at Careby Hall of Indian relics picked up on, and around the foot of, the hill upon which their home at Fork Union was erected. On property now owned by Fork Union Military Academy and on land now belonging to Mr. Austin White, large quantities of Indian artifacts have been recovered. This fact, plus other evidences too numerous to catalog in this brief treatment, suggests that a small Monacan village or encampment area for hunting parties may have existed in the Fork Union locale.

#### **The Seay Land Grant**

On August 20, 1745, an event of enduring significance to the future village of Fork Union took place. A crown grant of land in the amount of 385 acres "in Goochland County, Virginia, in the Fork of the James River, on both sides of Crooks Creek" was awarded to Abraham Seay II, son of a Huguenot immigrant to America by the same name. The grant was made in the name of King George II of England and signed by William Gooch, lieutenant-governor and commander in chief "of the Colony and Dominion of Virginia." (William Anne Keppel, Earl of Albemarle, was governor-in-chief at the time, but, like several other royal governors, he never came to America to see the land he governed.)

Issued from Williamsburg, the colonial capital, this grant was made "for divers good causes and considerations but more especially for and in consideration of the sum of forty shillings of good and lawful money." Today, the largest portion of the Seay land grant — since 1777 a part of Fluvanna County — is within the 500 acre landholdings of Fork Union

Military Academy. The original 17 acres of Academy land — never sold in all its history — was given to the Academy at the turn of the century by Mrs. W. P. Snead (the former Julia Moore Seay); other acreage has been purchased gradually by the school.

Abraham Seay II — “the Colonist,” as he is called by many writers — is known to have erected two pre-Revolutionary War houses on his property. Exact dates for them are unknown and must be established through guesswork. Provisions of the royal grant required that the tract be occupied, cultivated, and improved (“3 acres of every 50 acres”) within three years of 1745; otherwise, all land would revert to the Crown.

Unless Mr. Seay, the very first white resident of what is now Fork Union, was already on the land in 1745 — in anticipation of his application for a grant being approved — his first house was erected about 1748. This first house, “Three Chimneys,” was a combination house and tavern for travelers, especially those who used the stagecoach. It was destroyed by fire many years ago, and the chimneys being all that remained, the property became known as “Burnt Chimneys.” The site is easy to locate today; traces of the foundations and an old Seay Burial Ground adjacent thereto are approximately two and one-half miles from Fork Union village.

On a small, steep hill overlooking Crooks Creek, a mile east of Fork Union Baptist Church of present times, Abraham Seay II built his main plantation house facing in a southwesterly direction. Really two separate houses that were joined soon after construction, this old place was apparently built soon after the 1745 patent. The year 1755 seems to be the latest construction date possible if all the eight Seay children, whose birthdates are established, were born in the house; they are quoted in many sources to this effect.

At first nameless, but in later times affectionately called “Dipperville,” the house was a gem of colonial wilderness architecture. It was razed at nearly 200 years of age about 1943 by Fork Union Military Academy so the land could be used for other purposes. In retrospect, the destruction of the Seay homeplace was a genuine tragedy.

The Seay House was a long, somewhat rambling structure with a gable roof; and a wide, inviting porch stretched the entire length of its basically heart of pine. There were two enormous chimneys, one at either end of the house. Each was half native rock and half brick, the latter made by plantation slaves. The wide, double front doors faced the Richmond-Charlottesville Stagecoach Road (River Road). Inside the house was a broad hall leading from front to rear, and every room had a fireplace with high mantel over it. The log kitchen was separate from the house and stood some distance away in the yard. Meals were prepared

by slaves, carried across a cobblestone walk to the basement of the main house, and served there in a dining area having a dirt floor and an open fireplace equipped with reflectors to retain heat. Practically everything in this house was made by hand.

An apparatus called a windlass or "waterboy," originally invented in Wales, led from the log kitchen of the Seay House to a spring at the bottom of the hill to the rear of it. Buckets of fresh water could be drawn without the necessity of leaving the house in inclement weather.

Because the Seays were deeply interested in education, they always had tutors — some from as far away as Boston — to teach their children. In time, the children of many neighbors were invited to attend sessions, so the old house was also an early Fluvanna school.

Around the house Abraham Seay II had built, there developed over the years a complex of establishments that were in essence a tiny village, precursor to Fork Union. There was a tannery, a blacksmith and a wheelwright shop, a general merchandise store which served as a colonial post office, numerous slave cabins, barns, orchards, and a grist mill for the grinding of meal and flour. The grist mill, known as the Austin Seay Mill, was operated by water power from a large 30-acre lake affording boating, bathing, and fishing. The lake was created by an 18 foot dam on Crooks Creek; both dam and mill were built in 1803 by Austin Seay, Sr., son of Abraham Seay II. It is said that the Stagecoach Road passed directly over the dam, a large, broad "crib type" construction.

The peculiar name, "Dipperville," which was applied for many years both to the Seay House and to the settlement that grew up around it, was coined to indicate, in a joking manner, the numerous business interests of Austin Seay, Jr., grandson of Abraham Seay II. Ambitious and industrious, his enthusiasm for business ventures of every imaginable type led him at times to overextend himself financially. His inclination to dip into so many businesses earned for him the sobriquet, "Austin, the Dipper." Thus, in time, "Dipperville" evolved.

As the Seay family men and their wives of the past sleep the long sleep in their home burial grounds, the great plantation which they loved serves as the site of a fine military school, echoing with bugle calls and the voices of youth. One has the feeling that the sleepers would not object to this development very much — if at all.

### **The Brick Meeting House**

It would be difficult to overemphasize the historical importance of the Brick Meeting House to Fork Union's development. Built in 1824, it provided a focus, an attraction, a center of attention and activity, around which a community could evolve. To a much greater degree than is currently true, during a period when organized religion was the supreme determinant of human behavior, this church, like its

contemporaries, both suggested and influenced the acceptance of social moralities among those who attended it. It determined, in large measure, men's attitudes toward life's experiences. In brief, it moulded a community — in minute detail — while also building it.

The Brick Meeting House was for many years the only brick church in Fluvanna, hence its earliest name; and in addition, it was open freely to the use on alternating occasions of Baptists, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians. Truly, and in what appears to be an unusual arrangement today, it was a union church. Located in a densely forested section of the county where population was sparse and each plantation or farm distantly removed from any other, the new church tended to bring people together to worship a very personal God, to share the exigencies of life, and to assuage human loneliness in a mutual purpose and effort.

Fork Union Baptist Church of today, officially so named as late as 1925, was begun as an arm of the mother church at Wilmington, Lyles Baptist Church, which was founded in 1774. Sometime after the Revolution, a group of Baptists began meeting in "The Fork," presumably in the old Fork Church which was later called the Fork Meeting House, located near today's Central Plains. A Baptist Church was officially constituted in "The Fork" in November, 1798. These activities led to the building at the Fork Union location in 1824.

The old Fork Church, a wooden edifice, was used both before and after the building of the brick structure at Fork Union, perhaps as late as 1853. One gathers that protracted meetings and revivals were especially likely to have been held at both Central Plains and Fork Union for at least three decades after 1824.

Beginning in 1822 contributions were received "to build a place of worship at some central point within the Fork neighborhood." Those living in the present Fork Union area may have been reluctant to part from the Old Lyles Church or the Fork Meeting House near Central Plains. But at a time when traveling any distance from home was an arduous, often dangerous, experience, regular attendance at distant churches was clearly impossible; and Fork area residents dearly wanted to attend church any time services were held.

On land promised as a gift in 1820 by Benjamin Seay but not yet legally conveyed, construction of the Brick Meeting House began in early 1824. On March 17, 1824 a building commission (Thomas W. Omohundro, John Winn, and John H. Cocke) contracted with a man named William Farish to construct the new church from plans drawn by General Cocke. Bonding in the amount of \$600 to complete the building was to John Winn and was signed by Elisha and Benjamin Seay. A large number of outstanding Fluvanna citizens contributed to the building fund, representing all the four Protestant denominations who were to

use the church, General Cocke being the largest individual donor.

On December 22, 1824, Joseph W. Seay — brother of Benjamin Seay who had promised land to the church but who had never deeded it — and his wife, Lucy Hughes Seay, conveyed 1½ acres of land for \$9.00 to the three trustees previously named on which “to build a union house of worship.” This original house of worship is the present-day central section facing east on United States Highway #15. Additions have been made on several occasions, and the church now has a commodious sanctuary, a Sunday School Building, and other sections. Gradually, all denominations using this church, except the Baptists, withdrew as they erected their own buildings, the Presbyterians being the last to go early in this century.

Many great men have preached in the Fork Union Baptist Church, and innumerable fine contributions to village life have been made. There have also been vicissitudes: crises, disappointments, and defeats. Membership, once white and black as well as interdenominational, has waxed and waned in historical cycles as the tides of village attitudes have shifted.

The most unfortunate and lengthy schism in this church began in 1850 as a majority group of the membership led by Martin B. Shepherd, long-time clerk of the church, attempted to replace the pastor, William Moore, then completing four stormy years in that post. It appears that numerous church members considered Mr. Moore to be ungentlemanly, less than honest in his statements and acts, arrogant, disruptive when unable to prevail regarding any question of church policy, a purveyor of gossip spreading dissension, and downright unchristian on occasion.

For a time Elder Moore seemed to realize that he must go to avoid church destruction. He announced that he had accepted first one, then another position — finally indicating that he would stay yet another year. The Shepherd faction would not tolerate this decision and Mr. Moore with his group — a minority of the membership but comprising a substantial number of people — withdrew to the newly constructed Fluvanna Baptist Church. Those of the withdrawing faction who lived nearer Fork Union then proceeded to establish Corinth Church one mile west of Fork Union.

On October 15, 1853, Benjamin W. and Elizabeth Snead conveyed — for the sum of \$40.00 — two acres of land immediately opposite the Corinth Hill home of John Henson west of the village to a Board of Trustees which pledged to use it on which to construct a church. The deed specifically stated that one-half the property was to belong to the Baptists, the other half to be held in common by Presbyterians and Episcopalians. Original trustees were P. J. Winn, C. C. Cocke, J. Griffin, R. B. Payne, C. P. Snead, John Henson, H. R. Shepherd, R. Cleveland, Hugh Pettit, and H. K. Clements.

On Sunday, March 5, 1854, the new Corinth Church building was dedicated. It was a rather plain wooden structure "spaciously and handsomely constructed at a cost of \$1,600." Elder Moore was the first pastor, while also serving Fluvanna Baptist Church. He was followed in the post by P. S. Henson, James Munday, and G. H. Snead, the latter serving Corinth and Fork Union Churches simultaneously. For fifteen years or so all went well with the new church. It boasted an enthusiastic membership, attracted fine pastors, and was handsomely attended. Many revivals, protracted meetings, and James River Association events were held there.

Approximately in 1880 — an exact date seems impossible to find — Corinth Church's roof collapsed under the weight of a heavy snowfall, fortunately while the building was not in use. The building was thereby effectively rendered unfit for further services; its members, having been frequently invited in past years to return to Fork Union Church, gradually did so. Dr. G. H. Snead felt this reconciliation the greatest work of his long ministry.

Before the Civil War, apparently in the late 1840's, General John Hartwell Cocke — a dedicated and militant opponent of alcohol and tobacco — built a brick Temperance Hall adjacent to and west of the Fork Union Church. This building, destroyed by fire a few years after the war, was, one gathers, placed largely under church control. Both it and some part of the church itself were used as a convalescent hospital for Confederate soldiers, especially North Carolina troops, toward the end of the war, Richmond hospitals being overwhelmed. The churchyard was often appropriated as a drilling ground for C.S.A. recruits early in the war.

During the 151 years of its existence in the present location, Fork Union Baptist Church has always been at the center of village life — physically, morally, and spiritually. It has baptized, married, and buried a host of members and ever proved a positive influence, bringing comfort and light into their lives. In its old age the church remains strong, vigorous, firmly established, and beloved.

### **Fork Union Presbyterian Church**

Although Presbyterians have long played a prominent role in the historical development of Fork Union and, indeed, of Fluvanna County, there is today only one organized group in the County — those attending Fork Union Presbyterian Church. The attractive church building and an adjacent Sunday School edifice, both of wooden construction in a style reminiscent of New England Congregationalist structures, are located on United States Highway #15 at the southern end of the village. Relatively small in number, the Presbyterians are a dedicated, enthusiastic, and devoted group, worshipping and working

together as they contribute significantly to the higher moral and social climate of the village.

The first mention of Presbyterians in village history dates to 1824 when they were the owners of one-fourth of the Brick Meeting House and using its sanctuary one Sunday each month, sharing the building with three other Protestant denominations. Mr. Benjamin Seay, an elder in the Trinity Presbyterian Church at New Canton in Buckingham County, lived in Fork Union at this time and served as the leader of the Presbyterians. Mr. Seay was usually able to secure the services of the Trinity pastor for a monthly "Presbyterian Day" at the Brick Meeting House; when unable to do so, he led the services himself with the help of church members. This situation continued, occasionally varied by the appearance of guest speakers or advanced seminary students, until Mr. Seay's death in 1849.

From 1849 until 1900 Presbyterian Church history at Fork Union is best described as uncertain, if not disorganized. This is not to suggest that the Presbyterians were lacking in sincerity, depth of conviction as to religious beliefs, or earnest desire to develop and carry on a viable church program. Rather, the membership was not sufficiently large to support a regular pastor, and economic conditions were very poor. In 1854 they owned one-fourth of the new Corinth Church, and this activity, plus later developments, prove the Fork Union members kept their organization alive.

In September, 1900 the Reverend B. F. Bedinger, Evangelist of the Synod of Virginia, held a revival meeting at Fork Union. A number of individuals made professions of faith, a larger denominational spirit was aroused, and a petition was sent on October 24 to the West Hanover Presbytery asking for the organization of a new, separate church. In November the Synod received the Fork Union Petition from West Hanover Presbytery, approved it, and appointed a commission to organize the new church "if the way be clear." The commission canvassed the Presbyterian condition at Fork Union thoroughly, and on November 16, 1900 the church was formally organized by it.

In 1909 land was donated for a Presbyterian Church building site by Elder and Mrs. Samuel Seay, and the new church was completed in 1911. While awaiting the construction of their church, Presbyterians met at Arvon schoolhouse. Reverend Plummer F. Jones was called as the first pastor of the group, and he served until 1936.

In 1958 the Sunday School Building was completed. The fund for this construction had been started in 1957 by a gift from Dr. T. Bolling Gay.

On December 22, 1974 the church celebrated with special services the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Presbyterianism in the Fork Union community.

## IV

# PROFILE OF VILLAGE LIFE: EARLY AND CONTEMPORARY

### Village Character

Fork Union, Virginia, both in terms of physical and environmental considerations, has always been almost exactly what the term "village" connotes: small, rural, somewhat isolated, friendly, and basically conservative. It is also firmly religious, quiet, undemonstrative, and deeply aware of and dedicated to maintaining family and local traditions. Local residents are supportive of social associations characterized by neighborliness and amiable relaxation; they give generous help to others in times of adversity; and they believe in moral and intellectual uplift. In short, a pleasant and comfortable life is the "Fork Union way."

The village's population, today approximately 300, has fluctuated considerably — like that of Fluvanna County — since its first census of 1830. It is thus perfectly correct to say that Fork Union's population has been in past years both larger and smaller than it is today. It appears, from a study of census records, that population was largest in 1860 and 1880; the smallest figures were those for 1830, 1930, 1940, and 1950.

### Village Social Life

What social events have through the years been descriptive of the Fork Union scene? Has the village been a place of such hard work and rural isolation that good times, lively occasions, were foreign to it? Indeed, this is not so! A typical listing of a year's events, taken from diaries of the middle nineteenth century, details the following activities: frequent visiting of neighbors, near and far; trading of local news, garden seed, tobacco plants, tobacco sticks, experiences in farming, books, magazines, and newspapers; evenings of music (vocal and piano) in various homes; church and Masonic Lodge meetings; picnics; church revivals and protracted meetings; court days at Palmyra; auction sales; lengthy visits by relatives from near and distant places; marriage ceremonies, feasts, and "infairs;" baptizings in Racoon Creek, Judy Creek, and Crooks Creek (Austin Seay's millpond); church festivals and lectures (the former to raise funds for worthy causes); meetings of the Fork Union Literary Society (debates, original papers, dramatic readings); hunting; fishing; "possum" trailing by moonlight; sugar pulling or taffy pulling parties; shopping expeditions (especially on Saturdays); horse and buggy rides; and the eternal "game" of youth which we call dating, then called courting, carefully chaperoned. Obviously, life was thoroughly punctuated with opportunities to relax, to take a "break" from the toil of farming.



### **Village Activity: 1803-1860**

Considering its size, the village has consistently enjoyed a vigorous commercial and professional life. As noted, Austin Seay began it all with his grist mill and millpond a mile to the east. And there was the tavern, shops, and store.

From approximately 1845 to 1860, Fork Union had a post office, at least two general stores — one owned by Cornelius P. Snead — a blacksmith shop, a tannery, two or more churches, a grist mill, the Temperance Hall, Fluvanna Institute, one physician, a field school, tutorial schools, and several smaller enterprises.

John G. Hughes, contractor and builder, who lived south of the village, helped General Cocke found the first Sunday School and was a leader of the Methodists at the Brick Union Church. He received the contract to construct the old stone county jail and other outstanding Fluvanna edifices, and he speculated in tobacco and real estate. His first home was one of the earlier Fork Union houses and resembled the old Seay and Omohundro homes. His last home (today owned by Mr. Oscar Seay) still stands on Highway #15 opposite Skyview Motel; it bears all the marks of the old school of craftsmanship indigenous to the Revolutionary period.

### **Commercial Activity: 1868-1877**

By 1868, according to the "Virginia Business Directory and Gazetteer," the major Fork Union merchants were: Lowell, Seay, and Morris; E. A. Winn (at Winnsville); W. P. Snead Flour Mill; and Austin Seay Flour Mill. Fluvanna had found wheat profitable, growing a type of "hard" wheat which produced a flour that withstood tropical heat. Silas B. Jones was the local insurance agent. Certainly there were also the post office, the tannery, the blacksmith shop, several smaller businesses, and one medical doctor.

### **Commercial Activity: 1877-1891**

In 1877-78 value of land in Fork Union was \$7 per acre. W. S. Branham was the town magistrate; and Drs. George H. Snead and P. J. Winn were local physicians, the latter also serving as county superintendent of schools. Important general merchants were James H. Anderson (at East Point), Brightwell and Son, and E. A. Winn (at Winnsville). The Masonic Lodge was now well established, two churches serving four denominations were available to the community, and seven men were listed in a "Directory" as "principal" farmers: Austin Seay, William P. Snead, James M. Thomas, William L. Anderson, Robert B. Hughes, Samuel J. Seay, and Benjamin C. Anderson.

By 1881 W. G. Glass was busy in the village as a wheelwright; S. E. White had opened his blacksmith shop; and two new general stores were in business: S. B. and W. C. Jones, and Martin's. Another business venture, referred to as a quartz mill, had appeared also. In 1882 Mr. W. T. Weaver was saddlemaker to the village; W. H. Sadler's general store opened; and two enterprises sawed logs and cut lumber to specifications: Talley Mill and Merrit Seay Mill.

The last published business data for the nineteenth century (1890-91) includes W. H. Sadler as Fork Union postmaster; P. J. Winn as distiller; W. T. Brett, W. H. Sadler, W. J. Weaver, and E. A. Winn as general merchants; W. C. Jones as insurance agent; the Hughes Gold Mine; G. H. Snead and J. P. Winn as physicians; D. R. Norvell as a tobacco manufacturer; and W. T. Weaver as sadler and harness maker. Land was valued at \$4.80 per acre. and significant farming operations were conducted by the following: W. L. Anderson; D. K. Bordner; J. P. Snead; T. F. Bashaw; Mrs. G. S. Kie; J. N. Perkins; W. F., G. T., and W. H. Snead; C. P. Snead; Gidney Underhill; and M. J. Woolling.

### **Commercial Activity: Early Twentieth Century**

During and somewhat beyond the first quarter of the twentieth century, Fork Union remained a dusty country village innocent of any paved roads; when rain fell, the area at the intersection of the highways was a sticky quagmire. Boardwalks like those usually found along ocean-front properties and beaches were in evidence throughout the village. These helped considerably those people who walked from place to place; crossing streets remained an unpleasant adventure. Steep wooden stairs, usually without rails, led from boardwalk to street in some places.

Generally speaking, successful merchants of the 1890's remained; there were a few new ones, B. A. Burgess and Brothers was one of the largest general stores and Sledd and Pettit operated a drugstore and ice cream parlor. Fluvanna and James River Valley Telephone Company was chartered in 1909 and Louisa County Light and Power Company brought electricity to the community about 1927-28. The military school had electricity on campus as early as 1917, courtesy of Mrs. Charles A. Senff of New York who provided the money for purchase of a dynamo. Mr. Bernard A. Burgess, a prominent citizen of Fork Union, installed a Delco generator to provide electricity for his home about 1915; he also had the first interior water system, the water provided by a deep well and windmill and pressure from an elevated tank. In 1914 Mr. Burgess purchased the first automobile to be owned in Fork Union, a "T-Model" Ford, and soon opened the first Ford agency in Fluvanna to sell the wonderful "Model-T".

Fluvanna County Bank, the first in the village, was founded in the

winter of 1906 with a starting capital of \$5,000. Under the presidency of B. A. Burgess, the new bank flourished and remained in local hands until 1940 when it was purchased by the National Bank and Trust Company of Charlottesville.

### **The Village in Modern Times**

Fork Union in modern times, despite the fact that smallness in size remains its basic characteristic, is a far cry in almost every other way from the village of yesteryear. Paved roads and streets were finished by the mid-1930's and sidewalks were in place soon thereafter. Mr. H. M. Bransford opened a grocery store in Fork Union which is now Meyer's Fork Union Market. Mr. E. B. Weaver's general store (which he sold to Mr. Davis) is now gone, and most of the village businesses have left the area on Route #6 opposite Fork Union Baptist Church, traditionally the commercial center of the town. "Weber City" (named from the Amos 'n Andy radio show) grew at the intersection of Highways #15 and #612 south of the village with a service station, motel, and drive-in movie theater. Farther south W. F. Ranson built a shopping center and two light industries moved in. Fork Union Village Shopping Center, about a mile south on Route #15, was begun in 1969 by Leland Construction Company; in 1974 two more units were added to the original four, and more building is in progress. The Fork Union Branch of National Bank and Trust Company opened a new building in early 1975 opposite the Shopping Center. A community-wide water system was installed nearly a decade ago, the water presently supplied from deep wells, some of which are owned by the military school.

Homes now line Highway #15 to the north, following the moving of the Elementary School. Old Winnsville and Cohasset to the west are no longer commercial centers, but remain attractive residential areas.

The Fork Union Company of the Fluvanna County Volunteer Fire Department was activated during 1967-68, the parent body having been formed at Palmyra on September 3, 1952. A new firehouse was erected in 1967 on the west bank of Judy Creek with \$7,200 raised through community effort. William T. Melton, Jr. was first captain of the local volunteer firemen; Wade White and Clyde Sprouse were lieutenants. Currently two modern fire-fighting vehicles and fourteen volunteer firemen constitute the Fork Union Fire Company.

In 1972 free ambulance and rescue service began in Fluvanna. Organized through the efforts of Conrad Strickland and others, twenty-eight citizens qualified by the American Red Cross formed a rescue squad. Ron Early was president and Norman Skeen captain of the group. In February, 1973 a unit of the Fluvanna squad and a modern vehicle were based at Fork Union. The Rescue Squad, a body of thirty-seven active members, is supported financially by voluntary contribu-

tions from businesses and individual residents.

The village of Fork Union, as it looks today, would doubtless astonish those from history's yesteryears if they were enabled to return briefly from the "undiscovered country." Gone are the choking dust and the sticky mud, vanished are narrow streets and splintery boardwalks, forever lost are many delightfully comfortable and spacious country-style homes. In 1975 wide paved streets and sidewalks are the rule. More than one hundred homes and buildings subscribe to electrical service; 1,132 telephones are currently in use in the area of the village.

Village commercial establishments, at least twenty-six in number, offer most of life's necessities to their patrons. Today's citizens travel far, quickly and effortlessly, in all directions, but no longer of necessity to satisfy basic requirements. Dr. J. H. Yeatman has served the village for more than forty years, and Dr. I. V. Yonce is our dentist. Other professionally trained people are available within the community.

A century and one-half after it began the long trek into the tomorrow that is today, this once struggling settlement in the wilderness of Central Virginia has come of age.



## A CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS IN FORK UNION HISTORY

- 1745 (August 20) Royal Land Grant of 385 acres on both sides of Crooks Creek is acquired by Abraham Seay II.
- 1748 "Three Chimneys," first house in immediate Fork Union area, is erected by Abraham Seay II; it served also as earliest tavern there.
- 1755 Plantation house for Seay family is erected one mile east of present village.
- 1775 Richard Omohundro House is built on Spring Garden Creek.
- 1798 Baptist Church constituted in "The Fork."
- 1803 Austin Seay I is granted a Writ of Aquod Damnum by Fluvanna County, authorization to dam Crooks Creek and build a grist mill there.
- 1803-
- 1820 "Dipperville" community developed by Austin Seay I and II east of present day Fork Union (Approximate dates).
- 1822 Subscriptions are begun for a building fund to erect a house for religious worship in Fork neighborhood.
- 1824 (March 17) Contract given to William Farish to build Fork church.
- 1824 (December 22) One and one-half acres of land are sold by Joseph W. and Lucy Hughes Seay for Fork church site.
- 1827 First Sunday School (non-denominational) begun at Brick Meeting House.
- 1830 First Sunday School for Presbyterians begun by Mrs. John H. Cocke.
- 1831 (February) Gold is discovered on farm owned by William Snead; land leased to Rivanna Exploring and Mining Company.
- 1836 Gold is discovered on farm of Jesse Hughes; place is named "Eldorado Mine."
- 1842 First Baptist Sunday School is begun at Brick Meeting House.
- 1845 (October 15) First federal post office opened; George Holman Snead, first postmaster.
- 1851 Schism in Brick Meeting House begins among Baptists.
- 1853 (October 15) Land is sold by Benjamin W. and Elizabeth Snead for Corinth Church.
- 1854 (March 5) Corinth Church building is dedicated.
- 1855 Fluvanna Female Institute opens.
- 1864 (August) William E. Hatcher holds first of his revivals in Fork Church.
- 1865 (March 10 & 11) General Philip Sheridan's army passes through the village.
- 1870 (July) Fluvanna Female Institute is closed for last time.
- 1872 (January 3) Fork Union Lodge #127, A.F. & A.M. is established; John J. Ancell, Worshipful Master.
- 1875 Masonic Lodge buys land from Austin Seay II for Lodge Building.
- 1880 (December) Approximate date for collapse of Corinth Church building under weight of heavy snowfall.
- 1881 (November) First public school is opened in village; referred to as an "academy."
- 1882 Cumnor is built by W. H. Sadler.
- 1896 Dr. W. E. Hatcher purchases land for home in village.
- 1897 Careby Hall is built as summer home by Dr. W. E. Hatcher; occupied by Hatcher family on August 23, 1897.
- 1898 (September 30) Board of Guarantors is established to open Fork Union Academy.
- 1898 (October 15) Fork Union Academy begins first academic year.
- 1899 (May 19) First Commencement of Fork Union Academy; Attorney-General A. J. Montague is speaker of the day.
- 1900 Mrs. W. P. Snead, the former Julia Moore Seay, donates six acres of land for campus of Fork Union Academy.
- 1900 First building (Snead Hall) is erected on Academy campus.

- 1900 (October 24) Petition is presented to West Hanover Presbytery by Fork Union Presbyterians to organize a new church.
- 1900 (November 18) Fork Union Presbyterian Church is formally organized by order of Annual Session, Synod of Virginia, dated November 16, 1900, in Newport News.
- 1902 (September) Fork Union Academy becomes Fork Union Military Academy as military training is instituted.
- 1902 Eleven acres of land is donated to F.U.M.A. by Mrs. W. P. Snead (Julia Moore Seay).
- 1906 (November) Fluvanna County Bank is founded at Fork Union.
- 1907 The Academy presents academic diplomas for the first time in its history.
- 1909 County buys land for future Judy Creek School.
- 1909 (March 26) Land is donated to Presbyterians for a church building by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel J. Seay.
- 1909 (August 1) Fluvanna and James River Valley Telephone Company is granted permission to begin service in Fluvanna County.
- 1910 Approximate date for opening of Fork Union High School.
- 1910 Palmyra Telephone Company buys franchise of Fluvanna and James River Valley Telephone Company.
- 1911 Fork Union Presbyterian Church building is completed.
- 1912 (August 24) Dr. W. E. Hatcher dies — first president of F.U.M.A.
- 1912 Last co-eds graduate from F.U.M.A.
- 1913 F.U.M.A. becomes a property of the Baptist General Association of Virginia.
- 1913 (February 17) F.U.M.A. is incorporated under Virginia law.
- 1914 First automobile ("Model-T" Ford) in Fork Union is purchased by B. A. Burgess who also opens a Ford agency.
- 1917 Electric service begins on F.U.M.A. campus; provided by dynamo, gift of Mrs. Charles Senff.
- 1922 Fork Union Memorial Cemetery is given by Cabell Hill Snead to Baptist Church in memory of his father, W. Frank Snead.
- 1923 (January) Two major F.U.M.A. buildings — Snead Hall and the Armory — are destroyed by fire.
- 1925 Fork Baptist Church becomes Fork Union Baptist Church.
- 1927 Piedmont Telephone Company purchases franchise of Palmyra Telephone Company.
- 1927 Louisa County Power and Light Company begins electric services.
- 1928 Sherwood Inn is destroyed by fire; was formerly called "Stirling," home of Bashaw family.
- 1929 (March 21) Louisa County Power and Light Company is purchased by Virginia Public Service Company.
- 1929 William Frank Hotel is constructed.
- 1931 Approximate date for beginning the hard surfacing of U.S. Highways #6 and #15 in Fork Union area.
- 1931 Southeast Public Service Company buys Piedmont Telephone Company.
- 1931 First two generating units placed in service at Bremo Power Station.
- 1931 Mr. George Hewitt buys Southeast Public Service Company (telephone).
- 1933- Last session of Fork Union High School.
- 1934 (July) Mrs. W. P. Snead gives two tracts of land to Baptist Church for addition to churchyard cemetery.
- 1935 (September 23) Fluvanna County Bank is robbed; two killed, one an F.U.M.A. cadet.
- 1941 Fork Union District Elementary School opens on Highway #15.

- 1944 Virginia Public Service Company merges with Virginia Electric and Power Company.
- 1944 Mr. George Hewitt sells telephone company to Virginia Telephone and Telegraph, subsidiary of Central Telephone and Utilities Corporation.
- 1946 Airport is opened by G. R. Edgerton who also begins a flying service.
- 1948 (November 26) Dial Exchange is established at Fork Union by Virginia Telephone and Telegraph (130 stations; 4 toll trunks).
- 1956 Education Building is constructed for Fork Union Baptist Church at cost of \$70,000.
- 1958 Presbyterian Church Sunday School Building is erected.
- 1960 Current Fork Union Post Office Building is opened.
- 1961 (May 20) New 200 line automatic electric dial unit is cut into service at Fork Union in new building by Virginia Telephone and Telegraph (428 stations).
- 1962 Fork Union Motor Lodge is built.
- 1967-
- 1968 Fork Union Company of Fluvanna County Volunteer Fire Department is established; new fire house erected.
- 1969 First four units of Fork Union Shopping Center are built.
- 1973 Fluvanna County Rescue Squad unit is positioned at Fork Union.
- 1973-
- 1974 Fork Union Military Academy celebrates its "Diamond Jubilee".
- 1974 Fork Union Shopping Center adds two more units.
- 1975 New building is opened for Fork Union Branch, National Bank and Trust Company of Charlottesville.

\*\*\*\*\*

We are grateful to the cadets of FUMA who drew sketches to illustrate this manuscript.

This publication is dedicated by the author to the Trustees, Administration, Faculty, Corps of Cadets, and all former students of Fork Union Military Academy — wherever they may be in the world. They, too, know "the village" with affection.

— L. H. Halliburton

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The Fluvanna County Historical Society was founded in 1964 to collect and preserve manuscripts and other documents relating to the history of Fluvanna County in Virginia; to maintain the Old Stone Jail at the county seat, Palmyra, as a museum where antiquities of the county may be exhibited; and to encourage historical research.

Meetings of the Society are held three times a year. Annual dues are: Single Membership, \$5.00; Family Membership, \$7.00; and Contributing Membership; \$10.00. A life membership is \$100. A bulletin is published twice a year, distributed to members free of charge. Copies can be purchased for \$2.00 single copy; \$3.00 double copy. Readers are requested to contribute any information of historical interest they may have or may be able to obtain. The Society will endeavor to publish as much of this information as may be possible.

All communications should be addressed to: Mrs. Henry C. McGehee, Chairman of Publications, Fluvanna County Historical Society, Box 132, Palmyra, Virginia.



*The Bulletin of the*  
**FLUVANNA COUNTY**  
**Historical Society**

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Number 22

April 1976

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**COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA**

*Built in 1830*



## **THE FORMATION OF FLUVANNA COUNTY**

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**THE FIRST JUSTICES OF THE PEACE  
of Fluvanna County**

**Appointed by Governor Patrick Henry; took oath of office  
August 7, 1777:**

**Wilson Miles Cary  
John Ware  
Roger Thompson  
William Henry  
George Thompson  
Thomas Napier  
Jesse Burton  
Martin Key**

**Recommended by Justices at the first Court to the Governor, to  
be "added to the Commission of the Peace:"**

**Henry Martin  
Elias Wills  
Turner Richardson  
John Napier  
Willis Wills  
Robert Burton Payne  
Joseph Haden  
Thomas Thurmond**

**Recommended to the Governor by the Justices on December 5,  
1777:**

**Richard Napier  
Anthony Haden  
Benjamin Anderson**

## THE FORMATION OF FLUVANNA COUNTY

### The Birth of "Old Flu"

Fluvanna County lies in the rolling Virginia piedmont, a parallelogram, its southern boundary cradled in a sweeping curve of the James River. Above Bremono Bluff, the James cut a straighter course, sprinkled islands in its bed among the rapids, and made a miraculously sharp horseshoe bend at Scottsville. Along the southern boundary, the James is part of Fluvanna, not shared with counties on the southern shore.

The James River was named, of course, for the first Stuart King, James I of England, but its upper reaches west of Columbia — the south fork — was first named Fluvanna River, to honor a later monarch, Queen Anne. From the river our county took its name. The Rivanna River, which bisects the county on a northwest-southeast course, was also named for Queen Anne. It was often called the "north fork" of the James. (The name of the upper James combined the Latin *fluvi* for river, with Anne and the name of the North Fork combined a prefix taken from the word river.)

We have yet another river, the Hardware (named for no ruler of great Britain!) which curves and loops across the western corner of the county. Its name probably was a combination of "hardwater" and the name of Peter Ware who patented land there in the first quarter of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Like the Rivanna, the Hardware River has its beginnings in the mountains of Albemarle.

Fluvanna is laced with creeks, fed by countless branches and springs. To the first settlers the area was either a paradise of tall trees and abundant sparkling water or a desolate wilderness, depending on the expectations of the individual pioneer.

The area of Fluvanna was a part of Goochland County until 1744 when it became a part of Albemarle. After the Albemarle county seat moved to Charlottesville, the residents in the southeastern portion became dissatisfied and presented a petition to the General Assembly in May, 1777 to divide Albemarle and form a new county. The petition — signed by 132 citizens — was

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<sup>1</sup>"Hard water" in the sense that transportation by water was difficult on this river. In early deeds this river is called "Hardwater River."

presented to the House of Delegates on the twelfth of May, probably by Thomas Jefferson. He and John Harvie were the two delegates from Albemarle. The House referred the petition to the Committee on Propositions and Grievances, a step which Jefferson recorded on the back of the document.

This Committee, which included Robert Carter Nicholas, Benjamin Harrison and Carter Braxton as well as both the delegates from Albemarle among its members, took only one day to consider the petition. Jefferson himself had drawn a sketch map<sup>2</sup> of Albemarle County, illustrating the proposed division, and probably he passed it around the table during the deliberations of the committee. The next day this group decided the petition "reasonable" and reported it to the House with the recommendation that it be accepted.

The succeeding legislative course of the petition was short and happy. Speaker George Wythe appointed another committee headed by Robert Carter Nicholas to prepare a bill on the subject. On May 14 a bill "for dividing the County of Albemarle" was brought in and read for the first time. The House of Delegates passed the bill on the third reading on May 20, and the Speaker ordered Jefferson to carry it to the Senate.

The bill was presented the same day to the Upper House which passed it on the third of June. The House of Delegates was informed accordingly and the bill became law.<sup>3</sup> The boundary for the new county and the new Fluvanna Parish was set: "beginning at the most western point on the line of Louisa County and then running directly to the lower edge of Scott's Ferry on the Fluvanna River," leaving the ferry in the mother county. (There was another suggested dividing line on Jefferson's map, beginning at the same point on the Louisa line and running to a point on Rockfish River at its junction with the Albemarle County line, about seven miles above the mouth of the Rockfish. This would have made the two counties more equal in size.) The eastern boundary of the new county, bordering Goochland, was

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<sup>2</sup>The petition and signers and the sketch map were published in Fluvanna County Historical Society Bulletin Number 9. The original petition is in the State Library. For more convenient reference, the map is again reproduced on page 18.

<sup>3</sup>Acts of the House of Delegates, 1777, *Hennings Statutes*, Vol. 9. This Act is included in the Appendix.

affirmed, and the General Assembly noted, "Be it enacted...a straight line from bank of James River, beginning at a rock called Golgotha, a small distance below Ross's Ferry landing...to be run in presence of a magistrate at the expense of Fluvanna."

On June 19, Governor Patrick Henry issued a Commission of the Peace for Fluvanna County. "So Albemarle County was divided for the last time — with the assistance of her most illustrious son."<sup>4</sup>

Why, in the midst of the Revolution, did these citizens take time to form a new county? Why occupy themselves with such a matter when the country was torn by war?

The petition stated that the residents to the south in Albemarle wished the division because the Court House had been moved from Scott's Ferry to Charlottesville, and they found this change caused much inconvenience. They declared they suffered "many and great hardships and inconveniency from the vast extent of said county, in travelling to the court house." Many, they said, did not have it "in their power to attend to their business without riding (a full) day before, as well as a day afterwards." They mentioned the rapid waters of two rivers and many creeks that must be crossed. "Roads are extremely bad...the lands are craggy and mountainous."

Anyone who has ever followed the old roads down the rocky cliffs of Mechunk Creek or the steep hills bordering Buck Island Creek would be quick to sympathize with the petitioners. Today cars zoom along the route of the Old Stagecoach Road (Route 616), over the new Andrew Broaddus King Bridge high above the waters of Mechunk Creek (not descending to a rocky, treacherous ford), with only a glimpse of the soaring rocks of the cliff and with perhaps a passing remark about the hemlocks and Scotch broom.

Was convenience the only reason for the division? Was it easier in 1777, the first year of the Commonwealth, to form a new political division? The King's governor had departed, and no longer did Virginians need permission from the Crown to form a new county. The first man to sign the petition to form Fluvanna

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<sup>4</sup>*Papers of the Albemarle County Historical Society, Vol. VII.* The Act of the General Assembly creating Fluvanna County is printed in the Appendix. Information about the legislative course of the petition to form Fluvanna is from the *Journal of the Virginia House of Delegates*, May 12-20, 1777 and *Journal of the Senate*, May 20-June 3.

was William Henry, brother of the new Governor of Virginia.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps it was simpler to get sanction from the General Assembly and a governor who was related to your own people than from the Crown.

But there must have been other considerations. Surely Albemarle was not altogether happy to lose that much land area, though they sometimes looked down their noses at those beyond "the sand hills." The Rev. B. L. Ancell wrote, "Dame Fashion steadily refused to cross the Rivanna; and on the west, the opulent citizens of Albemarle have always boasted that they never crossed the Sand Hills and the 'Herrikin' — the natural divisions between the mother county and the daughter." Antioch folk still refer to this wooded area as "up on the Hurricane." (We cannot determine the origin of the term!) It appears that Albemarle retained all of the "Herrikin," for the soil changes rather abruptly at the county line. On the Fluvanna side today there are sunlit green fields and pastures, but Route 620 takes one across the Albemarle line into a wooded area of shallow rocky soil.

In 1835 Joseph Martin referred to the land between the James and Rivanna Rivers and noted "a large barren, level land which runs some distance into Albemarle." Through this area was cut one of Fluvanna's first main roads, which did much to develop the county area: Secretary Carter's Rolling Road, a road used long before 1777. It ran through today's Woodridge to cross Fluvanna on its way to the James River near Bremo (Route 620 follows much of its course today).

The proposed county line through the "barrens" and "the sand hills" was a straight line and seemed simple enough, but the determination of the line on the ground did not prove simple — it was in dispute nearly one hundred years. Agreement was reached in the 1870's, and stone markers were placed on all connecting roads (reminding one of the later Cocke Road). Some of the stones can still be seen today.

Two hundred years ago that boundary was a sore subject, indeed, and Fluvanna folk were ready to throw stones — if only verbal ones. They were angry that Fluvanna was not granted a

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<sup>5</sup>When the petition was published in *Bulletin Number 9* on pages 5-7, the names of the signers were arranged in alphabetical order, not in the order in which they appear on the original.

larger area of Albemarle, and petitioned the General Assembly to dissolve their new county. To understand their grievances, we must recount the organization of the county.

## II A Time of Dissension

When the first Court of Justices met in Fluvanna County on August 7, 1777 and eight justices took the oath of office, Fluvanna became a political entity with all the problems of organizing a local government. Reading the minutes of the proceedings, the reader is led to believe that all went smoothly and that the new county government functioned efficiently and without friction. That was not the case. There were differences of opinion, and these citizens of a fledgling government did not hesitate to make their voices heard.

The Commission of Peace and Commission of Oyer and Terminer<sup>6</sup> appointed by the Governor directed the men who were selected to serve as justices to meet at the home of Thomas Napier. Commissions were directed to Wilson Miles Cary, John Ware, Roger Thompson, William Henry, George Thompson, Thomas Napier, Jesse Burton and Martin Key, in that order. Six of these men had been justices of Albemarle County (Wilson Miles Cary and Martin Key were not) and the former justices were listed on the commission in order of seniority. (John Ware became a justice of Albemarle in 1766, Roger Thompson was appointed in 1768, William Henry in 1771, and George Thompson, Thomas Napier, and Jesse Burton in 1773.)<sup>7</sup>

Colonel Wilson Miles Cary had inherited Carysbrook Plantation in Fluvanna from his father, Colonel Wilson Cary, but had only recently taken up residence there to escape possible battlelines in the tidewater. He had served as justice in Elizabeth City County,<sup>8</sup> and being a member of a prominent, aristocratic family with close ties to Thomas Jefferson, he could have been the logical choice to serve as senior justice under different

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<sup>6</sup>"Oyer and Terminer." A court constituted by commission to hear and determine special causes.

<sup>7</sup>*Bulletin of Virginia State Library*, Vol. IV, numbers 2 and 3.

<sup>8</sup>*Journal of the Committee of Safety*, VI, p. 119.

circumstances. However, the plucky men who had helped their fathers carve a civilized society out of the wilderness must have resented the newcomer.

John Ware lived at Seven Isles<sup>9</sup> Plantation which he inherited by the will of his father, Peter Ware, written in Goochland County in 1741. John continued to buy land until he owned over 1,000 acres east of the Hardware River, centered on Rockfish Creek. Because of his mill and the river trade, Seven Islands became a commercial center of the day. Ware served as justice, vestryman and sheriff of Albemarle before assuming these duties in Fluvanna. He served in the General Assembly in 1781.

Roger and George Thompson, brothers, were sons of Joseph Thompson, one of the first justices of Albemarle in 1744 and the first sheriff. The brothers were vestrymen of St. Anne's Parish and active Methodists, and after the war they both served a term as sheriff of Fluvanna. They were both officers of the militia and saw active duty as officers with the Continental forces. George served eight years as delegate to the General Assembly. They lived near today's Palmyra.

In 1767 John Henry of Hanover gave his son William Henry 723 acres of land on the Hardware and James Rivers. He was the first lieutenant of the county militia in 1777 and became sheriff in 1781. He was active in county government until his death in December 1784.

Thomas Napier's father, Patrick Napier, was the first deputy sheriff of Albemarle and a neighbor of Joseph Thompson. Thomas served in many capacities: first colonel of the Fluvanna militia, county escheator, commissioner of special tax, and county commissary officer to secure supplies for the Revolutionary troops. In 1777 he was living on the south side of the Rivanna below present-day Palmyra, and he gave land there for the first court buildings.

Jesse Burton inherited land on the Fluvanna River from his father, William Burton. Like his father, Jesse served as a justice and vestryman in Albemarle, and then he held these positions in Fluvanna. His father's will was recorded in April, 1778 and soon after that Jesse left Fluvanna. With Charles Lynch he founded Lynchburg in 1786.

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<sup>9</sup>Later spelling: Seven Islands.

Martin Key, son of John Key of Albemarle, was Fluvanna's first sheriff and a vestryman of Fluvanna Parish. Intensive research failed to show he ever lived in Fluvanna, though usually a man could not be a justice of a county unless he resided there. He did buy 900 acres in Fluvanna one month after he took oath as justice and sheriff, but no deeds or will indicate he lived there. A neighbor of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello, he inherited large tracts from his father and then bought additional land nearby until he amassed over 3,000 acres in Albemarle. His holdings centered on the east side of the Rivanna River, north of Charlottesville, the area bisected by the Stony Point Road. A notation in the court records of Fluvanna in April, 1780, stated he was not a resident of the county, and his will of 1785 stated he was a resident of Albemarle.

The Commission of Oyer and Terminer was addressed to Wilson Miles Cary. He was the first justice to take the oath of office, which was administered by the two men who had been senior justices in Albemarle, John Ware and Roger Thompson. Cary then administered the oath to them and to the other five.

One of the justices traditionally served as sheriff, a position of honor coveted by all, for it produced a substantial income with relatively little work. At the first court, Martin Key immediately produced a commission from the governor appointing him sheriff. The minutes state: "Martin Key, Esquire, produced a Commission from the governor dated 4th August instant to be Sheriff of this County. . . and then took Oath of Office of Sheriff."

*The Journal of the Committee of Safety* stated that Wilson Miles Cary was sent a blank sheriff's commission on June 19, 1777 which was to be filled out by the justices at the first court. How, then, did Martin Key get the commission? Furthermore, John Ware had just been commissioned Sheriff of Albemarle on April 29 and served only a month before the County was divided. Why wasn't he given first consideration for the position?

At the first court the justices recommended eight more men to the Governor as "proper persons to be added to the Commission of Peace of this County." They were Henry Martin, Elias Wills, Turner Richardson, John Napier, Willis Wills, Robert Burton



Payne, Joseph Haden, and Thomas Thurmond.<sup>10</sup>

Henry Martin was probably the son of Henry Martin, Justice of Albemarle.<sup>11</sup> John Napier was the son of Rene Napier from Goochland. Joseph Haden and Turner Richardson were originally from Hanover County. Elias Wills and Willis Wills were brothers from the tidewater area. Robert Burton Payne was the son and grandson of sheriffs of Goochland County and inherited over one thousand acres of land in Fluvanna.

At the first court, the justices appointed John Cobbs to serve as clerk of the county. Also, Richard Napier produced a commission to be county supervisor. John Timberlake was appointed deputy clerk of Fluvanna at the second court, and took oath as assistant surveyor in October. In 1778 he became deputy clerk of Louisa County, also, serving both counties, and in 1779 he bought land in Fluvanna that he called "The Rising Sun."

When the militia for the county was formed, the justices recommended William Henry for lieutenant of the county; Thomas Napier for colonel of the militia and Roger Thompson for lieutenant colonel; George Thompson, major; and Joseph Haden, John Napier and Thomas Thumond were recommended for captains of companies of militia. This left Wilson Miles Cary, John Ware and Jesse Burton, of the original eight justices, without appointment to any major militia office. Of the second roster of justices, Turner Richardson, Robert Burton Payne and Elias and Willis Wills held no special office in the county or militia during the first months of organization.

Did this division of honors cause the dissent, the private feuds, and bitter rivalries that divided the county into factions? Possibly. In fact, many of those who had worked hard for a separate county later (October, 1778) asked to have the new county dissolved. The justices fought over the site of the new court buildings with both Wilson Miles Cary and Thomas Napier offering to contribute land, and in May, 1778 three of the original justices —

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<sup>10</sup>At the December, 1777 court the names of Richard Napier, Anthony Haden, and Benjamin Anderson were recommended to the Governor to serve as justices, making a total of nineteen names submitted by the end of the year. They usually rotated in attendance at court, so they would not have to serve too often. There were usually four or five present.

<sup>11</sup>Henry Martin never took the oath to serve as justice.

John Ware, Elias and Willis Wills<sup>12</sup> — banded with a small group of citizens to have Roger Thompson, William Henry, and Jesse Burton indicted for bribery.

When the General Assembly met in Williamsburg in October, 1777 and again the following May, they were bombarded with petitions from Fluvanna. Fluvanna's delegates to the session were Wilson Miles Cary and Thomas Napier, who, though they may have stood together on some issues, were divided over the site for the new court house.

At the first court the justices ordered the county surveyor, Richard Napier (brother of Thomas Napier), to find the center of the county "in order for the more convenient fixing the Court house." At the October, 1777 court, before the surveyor had found the center, the justices decided that a place on the land of Wilson Miles Cary was the "most convenient for that purpose," and Cary agreed to give a sufficient quantity of land "whereon to erect a Court house and Prison."

A petition objecting to the site chosen was immediately sent to the General Assembly, which directed that the justices re-consider their choice. Again without surveying, the justices next selected a site at Thomas Napier's — the place the Governor had directed the justices to meet for their first court. Napier gave the land for the site, and the first court house was eventually built across the Rivanna and downstream from today's Palmyra.

Many men probably were willing to give land for the court buildings, with the expectation of profit from a possible trading center with a store and a tavern, at least. Both the sites were quite near the center of the county. In the end that of the Napier's won out over Wilson Miles Cary's. Still there were those who signed a later petition who said, in effect, "a pox on both your houses!"

Another petition was more serious, and, at least in retrospect, unfortunate. One hundred and fifty men signed four petitions to

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<sup>12</sup>It is interesting, but inconclusive, that these three men, with Wilson Miles Cary and Robert Burton Payne, were those passed over and given no special office, and they were the men who remained most loyal to the Established Church of England. Only two of them, John Ware and Robert B. Payne, signed the petition to dissolve the county, but none of them signed the Justices' petition to save the county. Despite these facts, one cannot say conclusively that in the controversies in Fluvanna, the people took sides according to whether they were loyal to the Established Church.

dissolve the newly formed county and divide it among Albemarle, Louisa, and Goochland!<sup>13</sup>

The petitions stated that the former petition to divide Albemarle and form a new county "was intended for the Benefit and advantage of the People, by obviating the Inconveniences they laboured under, in going great Distances to Court and Musters; and true it is indeed ... in that respect very fully answered the purpose. But it is no less true, that it has brought on other Evils more insupportable than those it removed." They presented four grievances.

In the first place, they were very surprised to hear of the dividing line between Albemarle and Fluvanna. "We do aver that we never gave our consent to such a petition nor subscribed our names..." They claimed they signed a petition to divide Albemarle by running a line commencing at a certain point on the Louisa line and running to the mouth of Buck Island Creek, then along the Creek to its source in the Green Mountain, and following the Green Mountain to the Rockfish River.<sup>14</sup> The county, they said, would have been nearly one-half larger and included much fertile land, which would have helped the people of Fluvanna to pay the expenses of a county government.

In the second place, they had understood that the people would not have to bear the expenses of the public buildings. Now they found this was not true, and part of the money for the court house had already been levied.

In the third place, they considered that the petition opposing the placing of the county buildings on Carysbrook Plantation had been "based on a conscientious principle," and they were "expecting nothing less than it being set in such a manner as to prevent all future complaints." In this they were also disappointed, "for under the specious pretense of saving an Expense to the County, the Center, at which place the Law directs the Court House shall stand, has never been found..." and "it appears to have been made a matter subservient to the Interests of particular Persons."

<sup>13</sup>The petitions were very similar in wording. One is included in the Appendix. The originals of all petitions referred to are in the State Library.

<sup>14</sup>There is such a line on Jeffersons' sketchmap, very faint and partially erased. See page 18.

In the fourth place, they stated that because of the minuteness of the County and "the Indigency of the Inhabitants, it is evident to us, that we cannot bear the Burden of the public Taxes and the County and Parish charges without want and Ruin."

Three men who were appointed county justices signed the petitions. One was John Ware of Seven Isles, the other two were Henry Martin and Robert Burton Payne. As noted, Henry Martin, though appointed to serve, never took oath. Mr. Payne served for a time and then refused to continue as a justice. Perhaps their dissatisfaction with the division of the county and the arrangements for county buildings explains their refusal to serve. Judging by the size and prominent position of the first signature on each petition, they were circulated by John Ware, John Strange, Benjamin Lee and Henry Martin.

To counteract these four petitions, four other documents, including a petition signed by the county justices,<sup>15</sup> were sent to Williamsburg," addressed "To the Honorable Speaker and the Gent. of the House of Delegates." To the petitions were affixed over 220 names. Some of these were the same names as were signed to the petitions to dissolve the county, for one petition states "we did not properly attend to the contents [,] many of us never hearing it read were hurried into it not considering the consequences..." One man, Thomas Moody, wrote after his name, very clearly, the word "misinform'd."

Two of these petitions stated that the signers had heard about the petition asking dissolution of the county, and they contended that the requested division of Albemarle has "in every respect answer'd our expectations by obviating the hardships and inconveniences in travelling to courts, musters, etc., which Trouble and Expense annually Equal to the expense of the Public Buildings..." They claimed the petitions for dissolution were "set on foot by a sett of men who have met with disappointment in matters of Preferment, and provoked thereat [,] have drawn men of like disposition, and the unguarded part of the County." The petitioners did not consider the complaints presented to be based on truth and begged the House to reject the first petitions.

The petition from the county justices was quite different and denied the charges of favoritism in placing the court house. The

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<sup>15</sup>Three of the petitions are reproduced in the Appendix.

justices declared the other complaints untrue, and they believed the troublemakers had stirred up "the weaker kind of men who may be induced to assign almost anything," and declared the instigators might not even have signed the petitions themselves.

We know the result; Fluvanna County is still on the map. Though many had jumped on "the dissolution wagon," more level heads prevailed, and the new county turned its attention to the endless problems of local government.

Still another set of Fluvanna petitions before the spring term in 1778, gave some insight into the conflicts of personalities and ambitions of the time. Three justices — John Ware, Elias Wills, and Willis Wills — joined by seven other prominent citizens, petitioned the House of Delegates stating that Roger Thompson, William Henry, and Jesse Burton had been guilty of injustice, partiality and bribery as justices of the peace when they appointed John Cobbs clerk of Fluvanna County in August, 1777.

It is hard to see how three justices out of eight could have been solely responsible for such an appointment, unless they bribed others — in that case the others were guilty also. However, it is easy to see why some were unhappy that one of their own did not get this coveted position. According to available data, John Cobbs lived in Cumberland County,<sup>16</sup> and all records state "John Cobbs of Cumberland." He or his father did own land in Fluvanna in 1761, next to acreage owned by Jesse Burton's father, down in the fork of the Rivanna and Fluvanna Rivers, and he was related to Burton by marriage. There were also family ties between the Burtons and Thompsons, and the two families had been closely associated in the work of St. Anne's Parish.

In their counter-petition, Roger Thompson, William Henry and Jesse Burton claimed that one of their delegates (Thomas Napier or Wilson Miles Cary) had set the petition for their indictment into motion and fomented the differences that produced it, and that they had testified against them at the House hearing.<sup>17</sup> This delegate, they said, had personal contests and

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<sup>16</sup>It was not unusual for the clerk of the county to reside in another county at this time. Later, county residence was mandatory. With the clerk, deputy clerk, sheriff and one under-sheriff (Martin Key's son, Joshua) residing elsewhere, one gains the impression that many people looked for an opportunity to enhance their social and economic stations when the new county was formed.

<sup>17</sup>A portion of this petition is reproduced in the Appendix.

misunderstandings with several of the accused, and the three justices were sorry the House should be troubled with their private differences.<sup>18</sup>

The three complained that the committee which held the hearing on the first petition, as well as the House, acted without giving them a chance to be heard, ordering that they and the clerk be indicted and tried in the General Court for bribery. They further stated:

...your petitioners beg leave Humbly to complain that they have been most greavously[sic] traduced and misrepresented to this Hon'ble House and that they have felt the greatest Pain at being thus considered as criminals while they were discharging their duty to the Commonwealth, according to the dictates of Conscience...

They also noted that a great number of witnesses must be summoned for such a trial. In the end the four under indictment asked:

Wherefore Your Petitioners H'bly Pray that the Hon'ble House will be Pleased either to rehear the matter as it was an expartee affair, or to name some Person or Persons of Sufficient ability to be Prosecutors in the said Indictment, whereby a remedy may be Provided for a recovery of costs, in case...acquitted, which they Hope to be as they are innocent...

There is a notation on the back that the petition was rejected, but the House reconsidered. Surely the Governor could have used his influence to help his brother William Henry, and Jefferson had often relied on Roger Thompson in his efforts to promote river transportation and could surely vouch for his integrity. A notation by the House on November 9, 1779 states they were acquitted with "the greatest honor," and the three recouped their losses. They were allowed £62.8 for clerks, sheriffs and witnesses fees and £426.0 for lawyers and court costs.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>The animosity was still simmering two years later. On August 5, 1779 Roger Thompson, William Henry, and George Thompson were recommended to the Governor for one to be appointed Sheriff and Wilson Miles Cary, John Ware, and Elias Wills objected.

<sup>19</sup>Fluvanna Petitions, State Library.



### III

#### The New County and the New Parish

When Fluvanna County was formed, there was no separation of Church and State, and legislation which formed the county also formed the new Fluvanna Parish within its boundaries, taken from St. Anne's Parish centered in Albemarle and Fredericksville Parish centered in Louisa.

In 1777 there were three churches and one unfinished church within the Fluvanna area. St. Anne's Parish built Broken Back Church north of what is now Palmyra before 1772. In 1774 they planned a church to serve the lower section of the county. In May, 1777 this new church was unfinished. Lyles Church for the Baptists stood near the place now called Wilmington, and the old Fork Church, built before 1773, stood near today's Central Plains.

When Fluvanna Parish was cut off from St. Anne's, five of the eleven vestrymen of St. Anne's were living in Fluvanna: Roger Thompson, George Thompson, Jesse Burton, John Ware, and William Oglesby. All these men were named justices for Fluvanna.<sup>20</sup> Oglesby and five other new justices soon took the oath as Fluvanna vestrymen: Wilson Miles Cary, Martin Key, John Ware, Elias Wills and Richard Napier.<sup>20</sup> One other vestryman of the new parish was Benjamin Woodson, who was not a justice and lived only a short time after the formation of the parish.

Long before the formation of Fluvanna Parish, people became dissatisfied with the clergy of the Established Church, and the number of Dissenters in Virginia was increasing. Numerous petitions reached the General Assembly demanding the end of taxation for the support of an established church. In reply the Assembly decreed in 1776 that dissenters would be exempt from levies for maintaining and supporting the Established Church and then passed an act stating no money raised by taxation after December 31, 1776 could be applied to the operating expense of any parish. This law, coupled with the problems of division from St. Anne's, caused untold trouble for

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<sup>20</sup>William Oglesby was appointed a justice in August, 1782. Richard Napier was recommended to serve as justice in December, 1777.



the young Fluvanna Parish. It only escaped its troubles in the Disestablishment of 1784.

When the act of the General Assembly ended the use of taxes to support the Church, St. Anne's was building two churches, repairing the glebe house, and in debt to the minister, the Reverend Mr. Charles Clay, for his back salary. (They had been unable to sell their tobacco to the usual English markets.) When the parishes divided, St. Anne's vestry released the builder of the unfinished church in Fluvanna from his bond and allowed him to sell certain "European materials." This action angered many Fluvanna folk.

The two parishes still owned the glebe jointly. An act of the General Assembly adopted January, 1778 ordered the parishes to sell the glebe and divide the money between them. By June, the glebe still had not been sold. Then fifty-two citizens petitioned the General Assembly to sell the glebe land which Fluvanna folk had helped purchase and improve. They wanted it sold, even if it did deprive them of the services of the incumbent minister, Mr. Clay. At least five justices signed the petition, two of them former vestrymen. Despite a counter petition to the Assembly signed by sixteen citizens, including Wilson Miles Cary, John Ware and William Oglesby, who were justices and vestrymen, on June 4, 1778 the House again ordered the glebe to be sold.

This did not end the matter, for in October of that year, Mr. Clay, in residence in the glebe, petitioned the House of Delegates not to sell the glebe as this tended to dispossess him of his right of tenancy (which had been guaranteed the rectors who took an oath of allegiance) and, besides, the parishes owed him four years' salary! However, in the following year Thomas Napier and George Thompson of Fluvanna Parish, along with John Coles and John Harvie of St. Anne's, who had been named by the Assembly to sell the glebe, finally did sell the 400 acre glebe on Totier Creek.

Also in 1779 another petition was sent to the Assembly. This one demanded that the unfinished church in the lower part of Fluvanna be sold. Thirty-one members of the Fluvanna Parish sent a counter petition. They ended by asking that "no Bill or Act may pass affecting our Mode or places of worship unless the Petition should come properly authenticated from the Vestry of the said Parish fully assembled." Again, Wilson Miles Cary's name led the list to save the unfinished church. On October 25,

1779 the petition was "Referred to [the Committee on] Religion," who made a notation on the document "to lie over," and there the matter lay. (We wonder if the building was later finished and used? Could it have become the Seven Isles Methodist Church?)

The bitter suits instigated against the vestries by the Reverend Mr. Clay continued unsettled when the Church was disestablished in 1784. When the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia formed in 1785, the vestrymen of St. Anne's and Fluvanna Parishes made no move to continue a parish in either county, so the suits died and "Mr. Clay was left waving his arms in the empty air."<sup>21</sup> And the birth of the Episcopal Church in Fluvanna was delayed for over a generation.

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After 1776 St. Anne's Parish — and later Fluvanna Parish — found it hard to find men who would serve as vestrymen. By tradition every vestryman was required to sign the Vestrymen's Obligation: "I declare that I will be conformable to the doctrines and disciplines of the Church of England." Perhaps many men were unwilling to sign any statement showing allegiance to the Church of *England*, but there was no other name that could be used.

It is evident that the people in the new county of Fluvanna were active church people, but not necessarily in the Established Church. Very few church records for this period still exist, so it is impossible to state how many residents were Methodists or Dissenters. There was at least one Baptist organization in the county and the number of Methodists were growing so fast that the Fluvanna Circuit was formed by the Methodist Conference in 1779.

Of the first sixteen justices appointed for Fluvanna, we know the religious affiliations of ten of them. We have listed those who had served as vestrymen of St. Anne's and those who became members of the new vestry for Fluvanna.

There were those who felt a need to change their church loyalties. Roger and George Thompson, justices, were Methodist

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<sup>21</sup>A *History of Christ Church, Glendower, With an Account of the Early Days of St. Anne's Parish*, Elizabeth Coles Langhorne, G. MacClaren Bryden, 1957.

leaders as well as vestrymen. They worshipped at Broken Back Church and were instrumental in building the second church. (Broken Back Church stood on George Thompson's Broken Island Plantation.) Though still a movement within the Church of England, those who followed Wesley were sympathetic to the rebel cause and soon took steps to separate themselves from the Church and form a new denomination. As the Revolution progressed, no more ministers came from England; many returned there, and the Anglican leader of the Methodists, an Englishman named Asbury, went "into hiding" in New Jersey. Because there were so few Established Church ministers, and because the Methodist circuit-riding ministers were not allowed to give the sacraments, the Methodists decided to take drastic action. At the famous Broken Back Methodist Regular Conference held at Roger Thompson's home<sup>22</sup> in Fluvanna in 1779, the Methodist ministers formed a vestry and ordained themselves so they could administer the sacraments. This action led to the formation of the Methodists as a separate denomination.

The fact that the war years were a time of changing church loyalties is well illustrated by the information found on Thomas Napier. The county minutes of September, 1777 state:

Thomas Napier, Gent., William Basket, Benjamin Lee and Benjamin Martin, who were selected vestrymen for the Fluvanna Parish came into Court and refused to qualify themselves as such, professing themselves to be dissenters from Church of England.

These four men are listed on a plaque in Lyles Baptist Church which honors the founders of that church in 1774. Yet in 1773 and 1774 Thomas Napier is listed as Parish Collector for St. Anne's Parish,<sup>23</sup> and signed the minutes of a vestry meeting on February 19, 1777, just a few months before he declared himself a Dissenter. His father was a vestryman of St. Anne's until his death in 1775, and on his land stood old Fork Church. (We now believe that these staunch churchmen built Fork Church at their own expense to serve the neighborhood when lay readers or Established Church ministers were available to hold services, and then as the loyalty of the Napiers and their neighbors changed, the church

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<sup>22</sup>Roger Thompson's home stood on the place now known as Solitude Plantation.

<sup>23</sup>The Parish Collector received 5% of the money collected for his trouble.

building became a center for the Baptists. The old church re-enters recorded church history in the 1830's as a Baptist Meeting House.)

Some students of history give the Dissenters credit for the success of the Revolution in Virginia for the reason that they were opposed "lock, stock and barrel" to the Established Church. Others take a different view:

In the early days of Virginia, and up to the time when Church and State were separated, the Vestries of the Church were the powers of the state. They had fought the Revolution against Governors, Bishops, Kings, Queens, and Cabinets for 150 years before the Revolution. In the Virginia Convention of 1776 all members but two or three were Vestrymen...<sup>24</sup>

An act of the General Assembly declared dissenter preachers exempt from military service if licensed. However, the two known Baptist preachers in Fluvanna, Philip Webber and William Baskett, did not obtain licenses to preach in the county until after the war. Probably they were both patriots and took their places in the ranks of the militia. In fact, in May, 1780 William Baskett became second lieutenant in a company of county militia. The state law also allowed Methodists to join a company of others of like faith, commanded by officers who were professed Methodists. However, the two Methodist leaders, Roger and George Thompson, neither formed nor joined such a company.

We cannot say that the church affiliation of the early people of Fluvanna determined their loyalty to the Revolutionary cause. Studies indicate that all the justices, whether vestrymen, Dissenters, or Methodists, supported the Revolution. County records show that the Revolution pervaded all facets of life in Fluvanna.

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<sup>24</sup>*The Peopling of Virginia* by R. Bennett Bean, p. 171.

#### IV

### The New County and the Revolution

In presenting the early days of Fluvanna, the formation of the county cannot be separated from the war for independence. The same people were preoccupied with both endeavors. The men of the Fluvanna area had already spoken through the Albemarle Resolves of July, 1774 when they declared their sympathy with Boston and their determination to halt trade with Great Britain.<sup>25</sup>

After Lord Dunmore dissolved the legislature in June, 1774, the legislature convened in August. Many delegates present had been instructed by "Resolves" passed by their individual counties, as had those from Albemarle. The legislature passed twelve resolutions establishing an Association to demonstrate firm Virginia resistance to the British. Restrictions were placed on trade with Great Britain and on the purchase of British goods. Local industries and manufacture were encouraged. To enforce the regulations, Committees of patriots were chosen in each county.

The County Committee chosen for Albemarle in 1775 was led by Thomas Jefferson. In his record book he listed the members of the Committee. Two men who lived in the Fluvanna area were members, John Ware and Thomas Napier. Other members of the Committee were J. Walker, N. Lewis, Isaac Davies, John Coles, David Rhodes, John Henderson, George Gilmer, James Quarles, James Hopkins and William Sims.<sup>26</sup>

Among Jefferson's papers is a list of militia captains to whom Association Papers were sent. At least three Fluvanna men are listed as Captains of the Albemarle Militia: James Adams, Thomas Napier, and George Thompson. The activities of Napier and Thompson have been noted, and Adams was a large landowner who served as a second lieutenant in the Virginia Militia during the war, but who took little part in county government.

When Fluvanna was formed, the Militiamen within its boundaries had already seen action. Did Fluvanna men march toward Williamsburg in May, 1775 when Lord Dunmore

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<sup>25</sup>The Albemarle Resolves were published in *Bulletin Number 19*, the first issue in observance of the Bicentennial of the Revolution and of Fluvanna County.

<sup>26</sup>*The Magazine of Albemarle County History*, Vol. 23, p. 35.

removed the powder from the Magazine, and then turn right around and march back in July? Capt. Roger Thompson's company of Albemarle Militia were at Burwell's Ferry that summer. In June four companies, including men from Albemarle, marched "before Gwynne's Island in Gloucester." On June 26 Capt. Roger Thompson was issued a warrant for hunting shirts and leggings furnished "the Minute Company," and then went on a "Cherokee expedition." By March of 1777 they were with Washington and fought at Brandywine and Monmouth.<sup>27</sup>

Many of the founders of Fluvanna already held high rank in the Albemarle militia. Colonel Thomas Napier retained his rank, for he was commissioned Colonel of the militia of Fluvanna. Others may have advanced in rank in the individual companies. Perhaps it is significant that in the appointments of the officers of the companies of the new militia, all those given rank of lieutenant of a company, or higher, were signers of the petition to form the county.

Fluvanna men eagerly formed six companies of militia at their first courts in 1777. Their subsequent action in the war, the supplies provided the troops, the arsenal in the county where they assembled arms for themselves, the state, and continental troops, give the impression of a county of "Patriots."

If all the inhabitants were not solidly behind the cause of liberty, these "Gentlemen Justices" who proudly wore the new uniforms of the Revolution, soon found it out. The law required these men to "list the tithables" of the county, and at the same time "administer the Test Oath," in which the men of Fluvanna would "renounce all allegiance to George the Third, King of Great Britain." In the month the General Assembly considered the petition to form Fluvanna, they also passed an act which required the free male inhabitants above the age of sixteen years to take an oath before one of the justices of the county to swear, "I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the Commonwealth of Virginia, as a free and independent State." The act stated that "allegiance and protection are reciprocal, and those who will not bear the former are not entitled to the latter." Furthermore, the men promised not to do anything injurious to the freedom and independence of the state and to report all treasons and traitorous conspiracies.

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<sup>27</sup>*Journal of the Council of Safety.*

The justices reported those who refused to sign the Test Oath to the County Lieutenant, who was authorized to disarm them. Those refusing to sign had to continue attending muster, but were not fined for failing to be properly armed. They could not hold any office in the state, serve on juries, sue for debts, vote, or buy land. This act had to be read by the sheriff at the door of the court house on court day, and each minister was required to read it "immediately after divine service."

A later act provided for even greater action against Loyalists. The county appointed an escheator (Thomas Napier), who held inquests on the land of subjects of Great Britain and took the acreage for the Commonwealth. Less than a dozen cases were heard in Fluvanna. Most of the Tories whose land was escheated were absentee land owners, residing elsewhere in the colonies or in England. One of these unfortunate men was "William Ainge, a Subject of Great Britain, and is found seized of in Fee Simple of 1375 Acres..." The county could not overlook him, for part of his land lay just across the Rivanna River from the new court buildings, and joined the lands of Thomas Napier, Escheator. (Later, Thomas Napier bought part of this land. It would be interesting to know what became of poor Mr. Ainge!)

Fluvanna supported the Revolution with men and necessary supplies. Fluvanna's contributions to the Revolution were discussed in *Bulletin Number 19*. After the war Fluvanna folk were reimbursed for the food and supplies furnished, and if one took the time to read the many, many pages in the court order books that list these contributions, one would be amazed to find how well this tiny new county supported the cause. Some gave willingly. Others did not give the supplies; they were taken. The requisitioner only left a slip of paper in payment. The farmers had no real assurance they would ever be paid. A typical entry for an owner of a large plantation reads:

David Ross, Gent. is allowed 15/ pr Cwt for 41 Super fine Horses  
Rec'd July 23rd 1781 by Richard Napier, Capt., for the use of the Militia  
under his command.

The Same is allowed 5/ for ½ Bar'l Corn and 1/8 for ½ Bar'l Bran  
rec'd by Henry Tuggle for the use of Amherst Militia 25 June, 1781.

The men marched off to war, the commissary officers scurried to gather supplies, men worked long hours at the Point of Fork Arsenal to provide the needed arms, and then, suddenly, British armies were marching nearer — Fluvanna was invaded! The

soldiers raided the Arsenal and destroyed the arms hastily abandoned by von Steuben, and raiding parties were dispatched to plantations on the Rivanna and James Rivers.

Detailed accounts of "The Revolution in Fluvanna" will be published in a future *Bulletin*.



POINT OF FORK  
(FLAT IRON POINT)



## V

### 1777: Fluvanna County

In 1777 there were people here, black and white. By the time settlers came to this area in 1725 the Indians had already left. The minutes of the County Court report 882 "tithables" in March, 1778 and in May, 1779, 917 tithables. By 1782 the population had reached 3,300 people; 1,980 white and 1,319 black. There were 332 heads of families, with the median family numbering six people.

Fifty-three percent of the households owned slaves, averaging 7½ slaves per household. Wilson Miles Cary of Carysbrook Plantation owned the greatest number, 200, and David Ross of Point of Fork had the second largest number, 52. Forty-one households had only one slave.

In 1782 seventeen women were listed as head of households (widows of Revolutionary soldiers?), and of these, six were named Elizabeth and four were named Mary!<sup>28</sup>

The surnames in the first Fluvanna census derive from six nationalities:

66.7% English	9.3% Welsh
10.8% Scots	6.1% Irish
4.6% German	2.5% French

Of the names affixed to early wills recorded in Fluvanna, 54.7% were English; 27.0% Scots; 9.4%, German; and 5.2% Welsh.

Fluvanna did not have as many French settlers as Goochland (15.3%, due to the Goochland Huguenot settlements), nor did we have as many Scots as they (30.6%). However, we did have a larger per cent of Irish than Goochland, and a greater proportion of English and Welsh than Goochland or Albemarle.<sup>29</sup>

Most of the settlers had at least a rudimentary education, as shown by county records. A study of the first 185 different copied signatures in the first deed book of Fluvanna (being careful not to count the same person's signature twice) shows that only 19% could not sign their names. Of the first 400 names affixed to wills and inventories in the first will book, only 5% signed with an

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<sup>28</sup>Census of 1782, published in *Bulletin Number 9*.

<sup>29</sup>*The Peopling of Virginia* by R. Bennet Bean, p. 61.

"X,"<sup>30</sup> and in the book of original copies of marriage bonds, of the first 120 names, 16% could not sign their names.

The instruction of the young must have depended on the parents or resident tutors in the most isolated homes, but there were schools here. Perhaps some were held in private homes, but in 1772 George Thompson bought 170 acres in this area known as "the Old School House Tract." The churches may have taken the responsibility of encouraging education, for in 1805 a deed stated a new church near Columbia would also build a school building and a house for teachers.

Inventories recorded in the first will book in the clerk's office show that Fluvanna folk did have books. Most households had at least a Bible, Hymn Book and Prayer Book, and some inventories included these and a "Book of Sermons." Usually books were listed as "one parcel of books," but an inventory of October, 1778 lists one Church Bible and Sermon Book, one Testament, one Prayer Book (Could the owner have been a lay reader in the Established Church?), and "Allin's Alarm," "Whole Duty of Man" and one "Doctor's Book." John Good, whose estate was listed in 1781, had a library of 56 books valued at £420.

In 1777 Fluvanna was "pioneer country" and many settlers bought small farms and then purchased adjoining land later. There was at least one piano here, purchased by Giles Allegre in 1768, made by Joseph Malone of London. The inventories list only one "looking glass" (mirror) to a household, but recorded silver teaspoons, gold rings and brooches, gold and silver watches, and silver knee and shoe buckles and silver buttons. However, jewelry was a rarity. Most inventories list pewter dishes and utensils, pine and walnut furniture, farm tools, cattle and slaves. Homespun cloth was much prized as clothing was hard to secure, and clothes were worn by successive owners and even willed to successors. Feather beds were precious and were featured in all wills. (In listing personal property, the high value placed on the item "feather bed" included the bedstead.)

Rivers, creeks, fords, and ferries had geographical names, and the names of the rivers and creeks have hardly changed in over two centuries. On the Jefferson-Frye map of 1751, the only place

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<sup>30</sup>These 400 names include not only the divisors but the witnesses and the many names affixed to certified inventories.

noted in the Fluvanna area was "7 Isles." The only other names in 1777 were those of roads, plantations, taverns and churches. The churches and taverns were the formal meeting places for the people, and the water mills were the favorite places to gather news.

About this time British Major Thomas Anburey wrote home:

All taverns and public houses in Virginia are called ordinaries... They consist of a little house placed in a solitary situation in the middle of the woods, and the usual method of describing the road is, from such an ordinary to such a one, for many miles. The entertainment you meet is very poor indeed, you are seldom able to procure any other fare than eggs and bacon with Indian hoeecake, and at many of them not even that. The only liquors are peach brandy and whiskey. They are not remiss however in making pretty exorbitant charges.

The earliest taverns in the county area were Allegre's Ordinary and Bird Ordinary on the Three Notched Road, Joseph Thompson's near what is now Palmyra, the Fork Ordinary at the junction of the River Road and the Secretary's Rolling Road (Central Plains), Martin's Ordinary at Martin King's Ford on the Rivanna (near Union Mills), and after the formation of the county, Napier's at the Court House.

Apparently there were no stores here in 1777, though there may have been some sort of trading posts at the ferries and taverns. However, pedlars, the footsore vanguard of all commerce in the interior, certainly found their way here and are noted in early records. Finally, in 1787 Duncan McLaughlan & Co., Citizens, were granted a license to sell "Goods, Wares, & Merchandise."<sup>31</sup> The second recorded license was given Peyton and Price in 1788.

Transportation had depended on the rivers, but roads were opened as the settlers pushed into Fluvanna's woodland after 1725. Six-foot wide tobacco rolling roads (for rolling tobacco hogsheads to the nearest river or market) replaced the paths. The main roads at the formation of the county were the Three Notched Road, the Martin King Road, Secretary's Road, the River Road, Bryant Ford Road, Venable Road, Woodson's Road, Bibee's Road, and the road on the north side of the Rivanna which was called "Ross's Ferry Road" and later became

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<sup>31</sup>This store was in Columbia and existed before the license was recorded in 1787. The store on this site today is owned by Mr. and Mrs. B. A. Dickinson.

the Stage Coach or Post Road. There were others,<sup>32</sup> of course, and the justices of the new county opened new roads as requested.

There was plenty of wild game for food — and wild animals that were objectionable. At the first court held in Albemarle in 1745 the justices authorized that bounties be paid for 87 heads of wolves. (For a grown wolf the bounty was 140 pounds of tobacco.) Bounties for wolves were paid in Fluvanna as late as 1789.

Fish were plentiful, for an 1802 petition to the General Assembly objecting to the traps for shad at the falls, stated that Fluvanna people used to get thousands of shad in a seine in one day. River boundary land was much coveted for a fish supply. The Thompson brothers owned an island in the Rivanna called "The Fishing Island," and deeds stress "the Fishing Shores off Robinson Island." Often a small acreage by the river was bought just to obtain "fishing shores."

The date of the formation of Fluvanna was unfortunate, economically. There was little or no market for tobacco, which had been used in place of cash, and money was very scarce. Prices were greatly inflated by the war; yet the citizens had to support the war effort. The division from Albemarle, as noted, left them a very small land area, and, as the petitions show, they found the expenses of a new county government and new county buildings a great burden. The first county levy, March, 1778, was set at 4/3 per poll and the next year at 9/ per poll!

When the Revolution was over, the financial situation was no better. Fluvanna folk were paid for their contributions and losses to the armies in de-valued currency, and in 1782 the citizens of Fluvanna protested to the General Assembly against the recent tax which required payment in gold or silver coin. They declared "There is not twenty pounds of specie in the whole county." They asked that they be allowed to pay the land tax in tobacco or hemp.

Also in 1782 Capt. John Peyton requested supplies for Point of Fork Arsenal, stating, "...we shall be under necessity of plundering for our rations & G\_\_\_ knows that will be a bad speculation in Fluvanna where the Inhabitants are likely to starve themselves."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Old roads of Fluvanna were featured in *Bulletin Number 12*.

<sup>33</sup>*Calendar of State Papers*, August 10, 1782.

Many men of Fluvanna who had fought so hard and given so generously found themselves in great financial distress at the end of the war and were forced to sell their extensive land holdings. Many went west to settle on land they received for military service.

The first officials of Fluvanna were those who owned more land than most of the farmers, but their wealth in real estate was not the main reason they were chosen. The leaders of the new county had been leaders in Albemarle and Goochland before the division. They were for the most part, educated men, sons of families which had become prominent in the eastern counties. They had lived in the area long enough to already be bound by ties of marriage and financial and real estate transactions. Often they had been neighbors in the counties of their former residence, and when they moved to the Fluvanna land, they purchased adjoining properties and remained close friends.

The men who founded Fluvanna! Think of the topography of the county, these rolling green hills. Those men climbed these hills, they forded these creeks! They felled trees like these; they plowed these fields! Creating homes in a wilderness was a lonely toil, and the Fluvanna miles they travelled must have been rough and tedious. They were true pioneers. And they fought a war that this land might be free of tyranny. Many remained here, as did their descendants, but others, when they had planted a civilization here, followed the trails westward.

They lived and they strove — striving for this goal to be reached, and for that principle to be upheld. In retrospect, the striving is all that matters. Their strokes upon the mural of county history were made with long arms, wide brushes and strong earthy paints. They stride across the recorded page in seven league boots.

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Above the Rivanna  
February 1976

Minnie Lee McGehee

**VI**  
**APPENDIX**

**AN ACT FOR DIVIDING THE COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE  
AND PARISH OF ST. ANNE:**

**May 1777**

For dividing the county of Albemarle, *Be it enacted by the General Assembly*, That after the first day of July next the said County of Albemarle shall be two distinct counties, divided by a line beginning at the most western point in the line of Louisa County, and running thence directly to the lower edge of Scotts' Ferry, on the Fluvanna River, and all that part which lies south eastward of the said line, together with the islands in the Fluvanna river adjacent thereto, shall be called by the name of Fluvanna county, and all the residue of the said county shall retain the name of Albemarle. The said line shall be run by the surveyor of the said county of Albemarle, at the equal expense of the two counties, to be levied by their respective Courts.

For the administration of justice in Fluvanna county, after the commencement thereof, a court shall be held therein on the first Thursday in every month. The justices to be named in the commission of the peace for the said county of Fluvanna shall meet on the first Thursday in August next, at the house of Thomas Napier, esq. and having themselves taken the oaths required by law to be administered to the presiding justice by any two other members, and then by him to the other justices, may administer the oath of office to the sheriff to be appointed for the said county, and take his bond according to law, and may likewise proceed to appoint and qualify a clerk of the peace, and to fix on a place for holding courts in the said county, at or as near the centre thereof as convenience will admit, and shall thenceforth proceed to erect the necessary public buildings at the said place, and shall also appoint such places as they shall think fit for holding courts in the mean time, until such buildings be completed.

*Provided* That the appointments of a clerk of the peace, and of a place for holding courts, shall not be made unless a majority of the justices be present, if such majority shall have been prevented from attending by bad weather, or accidental rise of water courses; but, in such case, the appointments shall be postponed until the next court day, and so from court day to court day, as often as such accidents shall happen. The sheriff or collector of the said county of Albemarle shall nevertheless have power to collect and distrain for any public dues or fees which shall remain unpaid by the inhabitants of Fluvanna county at the time of its taking place, and shall be answerable for the same in like manner as if the said county of Albemarle had remained entire. The court of the said county of Albemarle shall have jurisdiction of all actions and suits which shall be depending before time at the time the said division shall take place, and may issue process and award execution therein, in like manner as if the said county had remained entire. The governor, or in his absence the presiding member of the council, shall have power to appoint a person in the said county of Fluvanna to be the first sheriff, who shall continue in office as by law directs for sheriffs. In all elections of senators to serve in general assembly, the said county of Fluvanna shall be of the same district of which the county of Albemarle now is.

All that part of the parishes of St. Anne and Frederickville, which shall be within the said county of Fluvanna, shall from the said first day of July, be one distinct parish to be called by the name of Fluvanna parish, and the freeholders and housekeepers thereof shall meet at some convenient time and place, to be appointed and publickly advertised by the sheriff, so that the said time before the first day of September next, and then and there elect twelve able and discreet persons, who, on qualifying themselves according to law, shall be a vestry for the said parish. The collectors of the parishes of St. Anne and Frederickville, respectively, shall have power to collect and distrain for any dues which shall remain unpaid by the inhabitants of the Fluvanna parish at the time of its taking place, and shall be answerable for the same in like manner as if this act had never been made.

## **PETITIONS TO DISSOLVE THE COUNTY**

**To the Honorable the Speaker & the rest of the Gentn  
of the House of Delegates**

The petition of sundry Inhabitants of the County of Fluvanna Humbly sheweth, that the petition for the Division of Albemarle county was intended for the Benefit and advantage of the People, by obviating the Inconveniences they laboured under, in going great Distances to Courts, and Musters; and true it is indeed, the Petition in that respect very fully answer'd the Purpose; But it is no less true, that it has brought on other Evils more insupportable, than those removed.

We beg Leave to enumerate a few of them. In the first place, we were not a little surprised to hear that the County was divided by a Line running from the most western point in Louisa County Line, to Scotts Ferry. We do aver we never gave our consent to such a petition nor subscribed our names to any other than one which was to comprehend all the Lands lying below a Line to commence in a certain Point of Louisa, running from thence to the Mouth of Buck Island Creek then along the said Creek to the Green Mountain in which it heads, and continuing the said Mountain to Rockfish River. This we say was as nearly the Boundaries of the Division pray'd for in the Petition we signed and understood. By this division the county would have been near one-half larger, a Great quantity of fertile Lands included, & of consequence the people better able to pay the incidental charges of a County.

2ndly At the time the petition was handed about for subscribers, we were informed, & it was proclaimed in several public Companys, which we are able to prove, that the Expenses of the Public Buildings, were not to be levied on the people; But now we find this to be a mere fallacy, as part of the money is already levied.

3rdly As the petition which opposed the Courthouse's being fixed on the Land of Mr. Cary, seemed to have gone on a conscientious principle we expected

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These petitions, preserved in the State Library, are handwritten. Insofar as we can decipher the writing, we have reproduced it exactly. Many of the signatures were illegible.

nothing less, than it being set in such a manner as to prevent all future Complaint, but on this we were disappointed, for under the specious pretext of saving an Expense to the County, the Center, at which place the Law directs the Courthouse shall stand, has never been found, and a place determined on as eccentric and inconvenient as Mr. Cary's, so that instead of considering the public Good, it appears to have been a matter made subservient to the Interests of particular Persons.

4thly When we reflect on the Minuteness of the County, the Sterility of the Lands and of course the Indigency of the Inhabitants it is very evident to us, that we cannot bear the Burden of the public Taxes, & the County and Parish charges, without Want and Ruin.

We therefore humbly pray that the County may be dissolved & added to the counties of Albemarle, Louisa, and Goochland, in a manner most convenient to the People & your petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray, etc.

John Strange  
Benjamin Martin  
Thos. Linthicum  
Tandy Rice  
William Johnson  
Silvanus Bryant  
Alexander Toney  
John Clark  
John Evenes  
John Kidd  
Charles Rice  
Stathey Jurden  
Wm. Hughes Lacy  
Miller John Jones  
Berle Clark  
Anderson Parrish  
Thomas Glass  
William Lilly  
James Webb  
Joseph Ashlin  
Pleasant Bib\_\_\_\_  
Richard Harris  
Robert Kent  
John Kent  
William Barnett  
William Martin  
William White  
Benjamin Thurmond  
John Martin  
John White  
Wm. Baskett  
Elias Williams  
Philip Webber  
John Sherord  
James Williams

John Barnet  
25 Freeholders out of 35 —  
Benjamin Lee  
Wm. Martin  
Abraham Strange  
Ro. B. Payne  
Stephen Sea  
Thos. Linthicum  
Stephen Clemmons  
Thoas. Clemmons  
Joshua Seay  
Edward Rice  
Leonard Henley  
Josiah Daniel  
John Smith  
John Bennatt  
George Cox  
Ellis Putney  
John Seay  
Austin Seay  
Lewis Kidd  
Moses Kidd  
Charles Richards  
Thomas Dougherty  
Joseph Woolling  
Thomas Winn  
Wm. Kirby  
Thomas Cawthorn  
John Melton  
Julius Sanders  
Caleb Stone  
Murrey Peace  
Thomas Denard  
Henry Martin  
Wm. Martin



Thos. Moody  
 Wm. Howard  
 Edward Howard  
 George Howard  
 Nathan Hall  
 David Jones  
 Joseph Parish  
 Wm. Marr  
 John Bybee  
 William Williams  
 Andrew defoor  
 John Ware  
 Wm. Oglesby  
 Joseph Oglesby  
 John Moore, Senr.  
 Benja. Tindall  
 Thos. Tindall  
 Richard Perkins  
 Richard Perkins, Junior  
 John Tindall  
 John Good  
 Richard Murrey  
 George Perry  
 John Howard  
 Richard Hall  
 John Nash  
 Absalom Appleberry  
 John Thurmond  
 Armiger Lilly  
 John Ashlin  
 William Taylor  
 Daniel King  
 David Bybee  
 Thos. Baber  
 Sandres Sotherland  
 Charles Askyou  
 John Henson  
 Hezekiah Stone  
 John May  
 John Peace  
 Jessee Parrish  
 He\_\_\_\_son Martin  
 Wm. Harder  
 Thos. Harder  
 Wm. Priddy  
 John Priddy  
 Robt. Adams  
 Thomas Adams  
 Richard Adams

Jesse Moore  
 Edward Lee  
 Jas. McDonald  
 Thomm— Tilman  
 John \_\_\_\_\_  
 Robert Lilly  
 John Melton  
 Dilmus Johnson  
 Daniel Tilman  
 Samuel Corn  
 John Ladd  
 Jehophat Ladd  
 Edmond Moody  
 George Haggard  
 Barnerd  
 (The Under Written names cut out  
 by Leonard Thompson  
 Joseph Bybee  
 Edwd. Bybee  
 James Stephens  
 Joss Stephens)  
 Thomas Kent  
 Hugh Lewis Venable  
 Thos. Bailey, Junr.  
 James Bailey  
 Thomas Bailey, Senr.  
 Bishop Toney  
 John Toney  
 Alexandr. Grant  
 Wm. Creasy  
 John Hunt  
 George Corn  
 Patrick Woodson  
 Ephriam Hamman  
 Thomas Cornhorn  
 Wm. Cornhorn  
 Claburn Sanders  
 Wm. Bugg  
 John Staples  
 William Johnson  
 Joseph Mayo  
 John Burgess  
 David Staples, Junr.  
 David Staples, Senr.  
 Willm. Staples  
 Edward Burgess  
 Jos. Fitzpatrick  
 Benja. Fitzpatrick

## PETITIONS NOT TO DISSOLVE THE COUNTY

To the Honourable Speaker and the Gent.  
of the House of Delegates

The petition of sundry inhabitants of the county of Fluvanna Humbly Sheweth that they are informed that a petition is to be presented to your Honourable house praying the Dissolution of our said County, we having lately petition'd your Honourable house to be taken from Albemarle and Established a county which you were pleased to grant in manner we prayed for, which now in every respect answer'd our expectations by Obviating the hardships and inconveniencys in Travelling to Courts, Musters, etc., which Expense was Annually, equal to that of the Publick Building and should our county be added to any Other the evils would be still greater than when join'd to Albemarle as the distance to Either Louisa or Goochland is greater. We humbly beg leave to suggest to your Honourable house that the petition praying disolution of our said County to be set on foot by a sett of men who have met with disappointment in Matters of Preferment. Provoked thereat have drawn men of like disposition and the Unguarded part of the county to assign, which can only lend to their Hurt & the great prejudice of the county at large. The evils complained of in their petition such as want & Ruin and their disappointment in the line dividing Between Albemarle & Our county; we do not conceive to be matters of Trust & your petitioners Humbly pray your Honourable house may reject the petition praying disolution & that our county may continue and shall ever pray etc.

Spencer \_\_\_\_\_  
Wm. Burges  
Richd. Omohundro  
Samuel Kidd  
Benja. Kidd  
William Williams  
James Eads  
Richard Bennatt  
Ellis Pitney  
Thomas Drummond  
Thomas Clements  
James McDonald  
Richard Hall  
Thomas Hammond  
Lewis Hancock  
William Johnson  
Micajah Manley  
Je. c Lambert  
Ashford Napier  
George Anderson, Junr.  
Claborne Sanders  
William Fitzpatrick  
George Duncan  
Reuben S. Brown  
John Mandley

Saml. Woodson  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Adams Cousins  
Jesse Corn  
Benjamin Hanock  
Falmon Napier  
George Corn  
Pearce Melton  
Thos. Shores, Junr.  
John Petercorn  
Joseph Bunch  
Wm. Martin  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Caleb \_\_\_\_\_ Hall  
Tunstall Quarles  
James Webb  
Wm. Beshaw  
Robt. Lilley  
Joseph King  
John Sims  
Richard Allen  
William Askew  
Benjamin Haden  
Daniel King  
Sanders Sotherland

Donald Fraser  
 Robert Napier  
 Robt. \_\_\_\_\_  
 George Butler  
 John Hensley  
 John Scott  
 Abraham Price  
 William Rodes  
 Edward Munday, Junr.  
 Henry Haaslip  
 William Giles  
 George Rodes, Junr.  
 Patrick Napier  
 Thos. Napier, Junr.  
 Thos. Moody - misinformed  
 Edwin Beam  
 John Johnson  
 Josiah Payne  
 Jacob Craigweles  
 James Stevens  
 Benj. Woody  
 Mecajah Brock  
 Booth Woodson  
 Robert Wright  
 John Williamson  
 Benja. Woodson  
 Robert Allen  
 Henry Reads  
 Julius Sanders  
 Marbil Stone  
 John Kidd  
 George Breck  
 Daniel Tilman  
 John Duncan  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Napier  
 Jno. Woodson  
 James Sprouse  
 George Anderson  
 Nathl. Thacker  
 Jacob New  
 Charles Clements  
 James \_\_\_\_\_  
 Julius Sanders, Senr.  
 David Wade, Senr.  
 Claiborne Wade  
 Jas. Davis  
 John Thompson  
 Ambrous Stogedel  
 Green Richardson

James East  
 David Bailey  
 John Robinson  
 Wm. Richardson  
 Robert Furbush  
 Matthew Jordan  
 Jesse Toney  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Williams  
 John Melton  
 Benj. Bradshaw  
 Jos. Bradshaw  
 Rand.h Johnson  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wm. Philson  
 John Hammon  
 Jno. Barnard  
 Daniel Lightfoot  
 John Mosby  
 Champion Napier  
 Moses Kidd  
 John Moor  
 Aaron Lowery  
 Joel Lowery  
 John Clark  
 John Clark, Junr.  
 Benja. Clark  
 Moses Lowery  
 Wm. Denton  
 Phil Sanders  
 Thomas Ha\_\_\_\_\_  
 James Eads  
 Wm. Lowery  
 Wm. Moody  
 Ambrose Sturgeon  
 Alexander Moss  
 Leonard Thompson  
 John Harlow  
 Henry Martin Junr.  
 John Morton  
 Patrick Morton  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Harlow  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Bybee  
 Tandy Harlow  
 John Bell, Junr.  
 William Payne  
 Anthony Haden  
 Thos. Rountree  
 Daniel Payne  
 Chs. Howard

John Thomas  
 Anthony Askew  
 James Kelly  
 John Lile  
 Benja. Thacker  
 John White  
 Henson Sprouse  
 X (His Mark)  
     John Sprouse  
 X (His Mark)  
     Henry Sprouse  
 X (His Mark)  
     Ambros Thacker  
 Jos. Fitzpatrick  
 X (His Mark)  
     Bradley Bellemey  
 Patr. Williamson

Jacob Williamson  
 X (His Mark)  
     Wm. Davis  
 Martin Amos  
 X (His Mark)  
     Benjm. Bellomey  
 James Adams, Junr.  
 Jonathan Clark  
 X (His Mark)  
     Wm. Thacker  
 Allen Brock  
 Benajah Clark  
 John Clarke  
 John M. Haden  
 William Haden  
 Jas. Johnson

MR. SPEAKER and the rest of the Gent. of the House of Delegates now setting in General Assembly, we your Petitioners, inhabitants of the county of Fluvanna are informed that a petition is to be presented to your Hon'ble House praying The dissolution of our Sd. County, whereunto our names may be sett but as we did not properly attend to the contents many of us never hearing it read were hurried into it not considering the consequences that must attend such Dissolution to ourselves as well as to the inhabitants in general within the county, as also the Facts stated in the Sd. Petition we acknowledge ourselves to be unacquainted with & conceive ourselves to be possessed of many advantages from the situation of our county in General for those and Sundry other reasons disavow our consent to a dissolution of our Sd. County & Humbly pray the sd. petition may be rejected and our county to continue & shall ever pray etc.

Thomas. Adams  
 X (His Mark)  
     Thomas Harlow  
 X (His Mark)  
     George Haggard  
 Robt. Adams  
 Richard Adams  
 William Harlow  
 David Bybee  
 Chas. Asque  
 David Staples  
 Beverley Clark  
 Abraham Strange  
 X (His Mark)  
     Thos. Glass  
 John May, Junr.  
 X (His Mark)  
     Thos. Doverd

Edmund Moody  
 John Hunt  
 John May  
 James Scott  
 Richard Harris  
 William Creasey  
 Stephen Clements  
 Richd. Murrey  
 John Bybee  
 Johoshaphat Ladd  
 John Kidd  
 Samuel Kidd  
 Lewis Kidd  
 Moses Kidd  
 X (His Mark)  
     Danl. King  
 Sanders Sutherland

X (His Mark)  
Thos. Drummond  
John White

James Adams, Jr.  
Julias Sanders, Sr.

To the Honourable Speaker and the Rest of the Gent. of the house of delegates, the petitions of Sundry inhabitants of the County of Fluvanna and Justices of the peace of Sd. County beg leave to inform your Honourable house that we have seen a petition with a number of subscribers to it which we understand is to be offer'd to you this Session of assembly praying for the county of Fluvanna to be dissolved and added to the countys of Albemarle Louisa & Goochland. And to induce you to comply with their Request have undertaken to offer many Reasons. Among the Rest they set forth that when the court by act of Assembly had it in their Power to fix on a more convenient place than Mr. Cary's, Instead of the publick good being consider'd, it was Fixt on a place to be Subservient to certain Individuals. We deny the charge as well as many more of their Reasons. We have Just cause to believe the Sd. petition to be set on foot by some Ill-disposed person or persons and perhaps their own names not affixed to it, but have got the weaker Kind of man who may be induced to assign almost any thing. We pray your Honourable house will never suffer such petition to take place, which charges a number of men of being guilty of Partiality who look on themselves to be faithfull subjects to the Common Wealth, & we hope those petitions to be Rejected, & our County to continue & as in duty bound shall pray, etc.

Roger Thompson  
W. Henry  
Geo. Thompson  
John Napier  
Turner Richardson

Joseph Haden  
Rich'd Napier  
Benja Anderson  
Thos. Thurmond  
Anthony Haden

To the Honble the House of Delegates <sup>meeting in</sup>  
General Assembly;

The Petition of Roger Thomson William-  
Henry & Jesse Burton, Humbly sheweth: that a memorial  
signed by John Ware, Elias Wells, Willis Wells, John Brooker,  
William Barton, Caleb Stone, Elijah Stone, Ben<sup>g</sup> Lee,  
William Pace, & William Taylor, was presented to the late  
assembly complaining of the unjust & partial Proceedings  
of your Petitioners, as Justices of the Peace for Talbot  
County, in their appointing John Bobbs Clerk of the 1<sup>st</sup>  
County Court; & upon examination of the subject matter  
of the said Petition by the Committee to whom it was re-  
ferred, and their report to the House it was ordered without  
hearing your Petitioners; that they, together with the Clerk  
should be indicted and tried in the General Court for bribery  
in the discharge of their office as magistrates; your Petitioners  
beg leave Humbly to complain that they have been most  
grossly & unreasonably treated, & misrepresented to this Honble House  
and that they have felt the greatest pain at being thus  
considered as criminals while they were discharging their du-  
ty to the Commonwealth, according to the dictates of Conscience  
that while they are to labour under the weight of a Proscrip-  
tion Outed by this Noble House for a crime they abhor, the  
Gentleman who is a member of this Honble House, & gives tes-  
timony against your Petitioners, has not laid his finger  
in the Prosecution, altho we believe he was the Principal  
Cause of setting on foot the said Memorial, and of form-  
ing the differences that Produced it, and had Personal  
Content & Misunderstandings with several of your Petiti-  
oners, who are sure that this Hon. House should be tranquil  
without their Private differences. Your Petitioners beg  
leave further to represent that in defending themselves  
against the Prosecution a great number of Wit-  
nesses must be summoned to attend from remote distances  
by which

**The Fluvanna County Historical Society wishes to express appreciation to the following for financial aid in publishing this *Bulletin* to celebrate the Bicentennial of Fluvanna County:**

**Fluvanna County Bicentennial Commission  
National Bank and Trust Company  
Carysbrook Mill Outlet  
C. F. Kidd's Store  
Ranson's Mini Market  
E. W. Thomas Inc.  
Virginia Farm Agency Realty, Inc.  
LeSueur-Richmond Slate Corporation  
Sheridan Funeral Home  
Stehli Division of Swarzenbach-Huber  
Waynesboro Republic Lumber Company, Inc.**

**FLUVANNA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OFFICERS  
1975-76**

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Second Vice-President ..... Mr. William A. Talley, Jr.  
Secretary-Corresponding ..... Mrs. John W. Ward  
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Treasurer ..... Mrs. L. T. Richardson

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Mrs. Ellis P. Snead, Mrs. James F. Perrin.

The Fluvanna County Historical Society was founded in 1964 to collect and preserve manuscripts and other documents relating to the history of Fluvanna County in Virginia; to maintain the Old Stone Jail at the county seat, Palmyra, as a museum where antiquities of the county may be exhibited; and to encourage historical research.

Members will be notified of all meetings of the Society. Annual dues are: Single Membership, \$5.00; Family Membership, \$7.00; and Contributing Membership, \$10.00. A life membership is \$100. A bulletin is published twice a year, distributed to members free of charge. Copies can be purchased for \$2.00 single copy; \$3.00 double copy. Readers are requested to contribute any information of historical interest they may have or may be able to obtain. The Society will endeavor to publish as much of this information as may be possible.

All communications should be addressed to Mrs. Henry C. McGehee, Chairman of Publications, P.O. Box 132, Palmyra, Virginia 22963.





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*The Bulletin of the*

# FLUVANNA COUNTY

Historical Society

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Number 23

October 1976

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COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA

*Built in 1830*

**"AT A COURT HELD FOR FLUVANNA COUNTY . . ."**

**By**

**Dr. Ransom B. True**



**EARLY SEAL OF FLUVANNA COUNTY**

Enlarged drawing of a seal preserved by descendants of the first Deputy Clerk of Fluvanna County, appointed in 1777 (who became clerk in 1784). Sketch by Miss June Wiehe.

At the house of the said Justice Gent. in the County of Fluvanna, &c.  
seventh day of June 1777, being the first Thursday in this month  
A Com<sup>o</sup> of the said County of Fluvanna, bearing date  
19<sup>th</sup> June last past directed to the said Justice Gent. John Ware, Roger Thompson  
W<sup>m</sup> Henry, Geo Thompson The Justice, Jabez Burton and Martin Low, Sen  
were produced and read. Whereupon the s<sup>d</sup> Madison Elliot Esq took the  
oath of a Justice of a Justice of Peace & Termen. which were administered  
to him by Chastard and Roger Thompson and the said John Ware, Roger  
Thompson W<sup>m</sup> Henry, Geo Thompson The Justice, Jabez Burton & Martin Low  
took the s<sup>d</sup> oaths which were administered to them by the s<sup>d</sup> Madison Elliot  
Esq.

At Court held for Fluvanna County the 7<sup>th</sup> August 1777.

Present at Court, all<sup>s</sup> Ware, all<sup>s</sup> Roger Thompson, all<sup>s</sup> Henry all<sup>s</sup> Geo Thompson  
all<sup>s</sup> Jabez, and all<sup>s</sup> Burton.

Martin Low Esquire produced a Com<sup>o</sup> from the Governor dated the 4<sup>th</sup> August  
entitled in the Sheriff of this County during his absence, which being read, the  
said John Ware, Elias Mills and James Mills was severally entered into two  
writs according to the s<sup>d</sup> Commission and then took the oath of Office of Sheriff  
John Ware is appointed Clerk of this Court and is sworn into his office  
James Mills and Joshua Key with the approbation of the Court took the s<sup>d</sup> oaths  
under the Sheriff

Robert Richardson acknow<sup>d</sup> deed to W<sup>m</sup> Richardson

Jacob Williamson ack<sup>d</sup> deed to Pat Williamson

Jacob Williamson ack<sup>d</sup> deed to J<sup>n</sup> Williamson

Elias Mills ack<sup>d</sup> deed to Mills's Mills.

Joseph Johnson ack<sup>d</sup> deed to J<sup>n</sup> Johnson

Daniel King ack<sup>d</sup> deed to Jos. King

J<sup>n</sup> Fitzpatrick ack<sup>d</sup> deeds to Rene, W<sup>m</sup> & J<sup>n</sup> Fitzpatrick

Rich<sup>d</sup> Hall ack<sup>d</sup> deed to J<sup>n</sup> Good.

J<sup>n</sup> Haden ack<sup>d</sup> his deed to Rob. Tisdley

J<sup>n</sup> Haden ack<sup>d</sup> deed to Joseph Haden

J<sup>n</sup> Haden ack<sup>d</sup> deed to William Haden

Ant<sup>h</sup>. Minters deed to The Heads to be proved by Elias & Mills's Mills, & Jas  
Minters

Christ<sup>o</sup> McRae his deed to J<sup>n</sup> Thompson proved by Lem<sup>o</sup> & Geo. Thompson

Elias Mills ack<sup>d</sup> deed to Mills's Mills.

## **"AT A COURT HELD FOR FLUVANNA COUNTY . . ."**

Selections from the  
First Court Order Book for  
Fluvanna County, 1777-1778

Dr. Ransom B. True

Dr. Ransom B. True received his Ph. D. from the University of Virginia, and while pursuing his studies there he taught a course on County Records in Fluvanna County in 1974. He lives in Charlottesville, Virginia with his wife and two daughters where he is employed as a research historian.

"At a Court held for Fluvanna County . . .". With these words the clerk introduced the orders for each and every session of the Fluvanna County Court in the Court Order Book. The words were not mere form and thus meaningless. Rather they implied the great importance of the county court, which was, indeed, a court for the entire county in the larger sense. To be sure, the county court was the judicial arm of the Commonwealth of Virginia in the geographical area defined as Fluvanna County. However, it was far more than just that. It was the squabble settler, the local government, the economic regulator, the dispenser of welfare, the overseer of morality and the recorder of vital data as well. It was truly the court held for the whole county and it was responsible for the welfare of the whole county.

The county courts in Virginia grew out of the English manorial, shire, corporation and ecclesiastical courts. They were created by the General Assembly in 1634 when the colony was divided into eight shires or counties. The county courts were a complete success and quickly took on additional duties, developed procedure by changing English common law to fit the peculiarities of the Virginia situation, and became an important institution in early Virginia. So entrenched were the county courts that the General Assembly, when revising the laws in 1710, provided that "in every county . . . there shall be held a monthly court, *according* to antient custom and useage heretofore . . . practiced, which shall be called county courts."<sup>1</sup> This law, reenacted in 1748 refined only a few points of procedure.

The county courts accrued more responsibilities throughout the eighteenth century, especially where local conditions rendered oversight of a particular problem necessary. Thus county courts along the Chesapeake Bay dealt with maritime affairs, while those on the frontiers

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<sup>1</sup>William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619*. (Commonwealth of Virginia: Richmond; 1823) III, 504.

dealt with Indians, wolves and defense. The Revolutionary War changed the county courts very little. Indeed the requirements of a wartime economy and the threats of invasion tended to increase the powers of the county court.

These powers continued unabated until 1816 when the Assembly provided for the creation of circuit courts. Gradually the powers of the county court were curtailed. By 1820 deeds no longer had to be proved in open court, and by the 1830's the office of sheriff became elective. The circuit courts were given more power in the 1850's and the Civil War finally doomed the county courts. In 1869 the Underwood Constitution deprived the county courts of almost all of their powers, and in 1902, the constitution abolished them entirely.<sup>2</sup>

The powers of the early county court fell into five broad categories. These were the power to adjudicate, to administer, to regulate, to oversee and to certify.

The power to adjudicate, the familiar judicial power, extended to both criminal and civil cases. In criminal cases, the court's power was limited only in felony cases in which the accused was a free person. In this situation, the court could only hear the evidence and decide if it were sufficient to warrant a trial in the General Court (until 1788, and again 1808-1816), the District Court (1788-1808), or the Circuit Court (after 1816). In all other criminal cases the court's authority was absolute and extended even to capital crimes if the accused were a slave. Of course all defendants except slaves had the right of appeal, although few availed themselves of the right.

The court's power in civil cases extended to all cases in law and equity. Law cases, which made up the vast majority of cases which the court heard, were the familiar debt, trespass and assault and battery cases. In all of these, the plaintiff merely had to prove that the defendant had not complied with the law by not paying a debt, by not fulfilling a contract or by injuring the plaintiff monetarily such as by damaging his or her possessions.

Equity cases in the county courts were called chancery cases. In chancery cases the question was the rightness or wrongness of an action or situation. Most chancery cases involved land or estates and questions such as who was the rightful owner of certain property or how could a person's rights be protected. Chancery cases were decided by the same justices, in the same room, and often at the same sessions as other cases. The rules in chancery cases were slightly different, as was the terminology. For example, plaintiffs in chancery cases were called

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<sup>2</sup>The county court familiar to many Virginians now was similar to the old county court in name only. The new county court grew out of the need for a misdemeanor and traffic court in the 1930's. It functioned until 1974 when it was merged into the General District Court.

complainants and defendants were called respondents. Otherwise a chancery case was similar to a law case and the result, a decision rendered by the justices, was the same.

The power to administer was the power to serve as the local government for the county. It was a vast and ill-defined power. Under it, the court could open, maintain, change and close roads, build, repair and close bridges, and build, maintain and use the county buildings—principally the courthouse, prison, clerk's office, whipping post, stocks and gallows, although the latter was often constructed as the need arose.

The court had the power to designate fords and see that they were kept clear, as well as to license, regulate and maintain ferries which crossed county waterways. (The Colony and later the Commonwealth had the power to regulate all ferries which touched two or more counties, but it often surrendered the right to the courts of the counties concerned.)

The court nominated justices of the peace, sheriffs, clerks, coroners and militia officers, licensed attorneys and ministers (to perform marriages), and appointed all sorts of commissioners, special and permanent. Most important, however, was the power the court had to levy, collect and spend the county taxes and to authorize and pay all accounts against the county.

The power of the county court to regulate was, like the power to administer, as ill-defined as it was substantial. The court could license, regulate and close all taverns (or ordinaries as they were called), and prescribe their prices for food, drink and lodging. It could license and regulate all mills of whatever type and prescribe heights of mill-dams, the presence or absence of locks or fish ladders, the size and overflow of the millpond and assess the damages suffered by adjacent landowners. During the Revolutionary War, the court regulated the price and distribution of scarce commodities, notably salt. The court appointed and removed the various inspectors, such as tobacco, flour, beef, pork, lumber, fish and barrel inspectors. The Court required and maintained standard weights and measures and appointed inspectors and sealers of weights and measures. Of course, the court could, and did, prosecute tradesmen who sold by short weights or measures. The court could regulate markets and, after the Revolutionary War, license and regulate peddlers.

The court had the power to oversee the welfare and morality of the county's inhabitants. It provided welfare directly or ordered the Churchwardens (and later the Overseers of the Poor) to take action. It compelled parents to show how they were supporting their children and could remove children from families, placing them elsewhere if necessary. It enforced, with varying strictness, the laws against fornication and adultery and provided for the raising of illegitimate children, usually by apprenticing them to someone in the county. The

court could not grant a divorce, but it could, and did, grant a separation of bed and board to a married couple, usually because of physical violence. More often the court required one partner (usually, but not invariably, the man) to post bond for his or her good behavior to all the county's inhabitants, but especially to his or her spouse. It could, and often did, require neighbors to post bond to keep the peace towards one another.

Although the power to certify was the least of the court's powers, it was the one that took up most of the court's time and the one which involved the most people. Deeds, wills, bonds, bills of sale, myriads of different public and private accounts, and even—in Louisa County—the pedigree of a horse, were brought before the court for certifying, proof or authentication. Virtually all appointed officers had to take an oath for the faithful performance of their duties, and each of them had to come before the court, which alone could administer an oath. After 1789, federal law authorized the county courts to certify all sorts of documents, ranging from deeds to land in other states (through accounts due citizens from the federal government), to pension applications for Revolutionary War service.

The powers of the court were exercised by the justices of the peace. They were nominated by the court itself and appointed by the governor for life. Thus the court was self-perpetuating. The justices were prohibited from receiving any compensation for their services other than the honor the position carried. Generally the justices were the wealthiest and most socially and politically prominent men in the county, and were usually planters and large slaveholders. After 1800, however, the court's business increased substantially and the justice's duties became far more onerous than honorific. Many of the planters refused to qualify as justices, even though they were appointed, and the position fell to smaller planters, merchants, millers and even tavern keepers. Although the quality of justice did not necessarily suffer from this change, it did serve to lower the court's prestige and, ultimately, contributed to its abolition.<sup>3</sup>

The clerk of the court who kept the records and—more important—issued the writs necessary to initiate and sustain a case in court, was appointed by the Governor upon the nomination of the court itself. He served at the pleasure of the court, usually until he died, receiving a salary from it as well as substantial fees from litigants and others who came before it.

The sheriff, who executed the writs and carried out the court's

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<sup>3</sup>The best description and account of the justices of the peace is Charles S. Sydnor, *American Revolutionaries in the Making: Political Practices in Washington's Virginia*. (University of North Carolina Press; Chapel Hill; 1952). It makes delightful reading.



orders, was a justice of the peace himself. He too was nominated by the court and appointed by the Governor, usually for a two-year term. The position was time-consuming, hard and lucrative. Frequently, however, the dirty work could be farmed out to the undersheriffs who were employed by the sheriff and approved by the court. Some undersheriffs served several years and a few even made their living in this manner. Constables were given special bailiwicks and were responsible for keeping the peace therein. They were law enforcement officers, not process servers, and were paid for their services on a part-time basis by the court. Usually they were young men; often they were the sons of wealthy planters.

Coroners were responsible for investigating all suspicious deaths and calling inquests to view dead bodies if necessary. Coroners were also empowered by statutory law to act as sheriffs if necessary. Although they seldom did, this possibility usually meant that they were more substantial men than the position would normally warrant. Like other officers, they were nominated by the court and appointed by the Governor.

Other officials—Churchwardens, vestrymen, Overseers of the Poor, militia officers and tax assessors—had tasks to perform in the county independent of the court. Furthermore, except for militia officers, the court exerted no influence over their appointment or election. However, the court could, and did, require each and all of these officials to perform certain acts, and, thus, they too appear in the records.

The records of the court sessions are contained in two different books, the Minute Books and the Court Order Books. The Minute Books were kept by the clerk during the court session. They are shorter than the Court Order Books, more compact and full of shorthand notes, abbreviations and only the barest notation about each item or action. They are quicker and easier to use than the Court Order Books, if the user can understand the abbreviations, shorthand and annotation. The Court Order Books, on the other hand, are fuller, more detailed and filled with more formal language than the Minute Books. For those unfamiliar with the terminology, they are far easier to use and understand than the Minute Books.

The selections which follow are from the first Court Order Book for Fluvanna County, starting with the first session on August 7, 1777. They are reproduced as accurately as possible and include all of the abbreviations, notations and comments that appear in the original version. For the first three sessions, the selections are verbatim, nothing is omitted. Thereafter only representative selections are included, but all together about eighty percent of the orders for the first eight months are included.

**COURT ORDERS OF FLUVANNA COUNTY,  
1777-1778**

At the house of Thomas Napier Gent.<sup>4</sup> in the County of Fluvanna on the seventh day of August 1777, being the first Thursday in this month, a Comn. of the peace and a Comn. of oyer and terminer bearing date of 19th June last past directed to Wilson Miles Cary, John Ware, Roger Thompson, Wm. Henry, Geo. Thompson, Thos. Napier, Jesse Burton and Martin Key, Gent. were produced and read. Whereupon the Sd. Wilson Miles Cary took the oath of a justice & of a justice of Oyer and Terminer.<sup>5</sup> Which were administered to him by John Ware and Roger Thompson, and the said John Ware, Roger Thompson, Wm. Henry, Geo. Thompson, Tho. Napier, Jesse Burton, and Martin Key took the Sd. oaths which were administered to them by Sd. Wilson Miles Cary.

At a Court held for Fluvanna County the 7th August 1777. Prest. Mr. Cary, Mr. Ware, Mr. Roger Thompson, Mr. Henry, Mr. Geo. Thompson, Mr. Napier and Mr. Burton.

Martin Key Esquire produced a Comn. from the governor dated the 4th August instant<sup>6</sup> to be Sheriff of this County during pleasure, which being read, the Sd. Key and Elias Wills and James Marks his securities<sup>7</sup> entered into two bonds<sup>8</sup> according to the Sd. Commission and then took Oath of Office of Sheriff.

John Cobbs is appointed Clerk of this Court and is sworn into his office.

James Marks and Joshua Key with the approbation of the court took the oath of undersheriff.

Robert Richardson acknowd. deed to Wm. Richardson<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Gent.: Gentleman or Gentlemen and refers invariably to one or more justices of the peace.

<sup>5</sup>Oyer and Terminer means literally to call and to terminate. A court of oyer and terminer was sometimes known as a called court since it met independently and was not part of the regular monthly court. It was almost always a criminal court and required at least five and no more than eight justices.

<sup>6</sup>Instant means present and refers to dates. In this case the date is August 4, 1777.

<sup>7</sup>A security was a surety on a bond. If the maker of the bond failed to perform whatever he promised to do in the bond, then the person to whom the bond was given had legal recourse to the securities.

<sup>8</sup>These were performance bonds guaranteeing that the sheriff would perform his office and would account for all fines and other money he collected.

<sup>9</sup>"acknowd" or "acks. a deed": acknowledged a deed. A seller was required to come into open court and acknowledge that he had made the deed and that it was his own doing in order for it to be proved.

Jacob Williamson acks. [a] deed to Pat. Williamson  
 Jacob Williamson acks. [a] deed to Jno. Williamson  
 Elias Wills acks. deed to Willis Wills.  
 Joseph Johnson acks. deed to Jno. Johnson  
 Daniel King acks. deed to Jos. King  
 Jos. Fitzpatrick acks. deeds to Rene, Wm. & Jos. Fitzpatrick  
 Richd. Hall acks. deed etc. to Jno. Good.  
 Jno. Haden acks. his deed to Robt. Pasley  
 Jno. Haden acks. deed to Joseph Haden  
 Jno. Haden acks. deed to William Haden  
 Anth. Minter's deed to Tho. Pleasants proved by Elias & Willis Wills  
 & Jas. Minter.<sup>10</sup>

Christo. McRae his deed to Jno. Thompson proved by Leond. &  
 Geo. Thompson

Elias Wills acks. deed to Willis Wills  
 Rene Woodson's deed to Patrick Woodson proved by Wits.  
 Rene Woodson's deed to Archd. Sneed proved by Ben Anderson,  
 Tho. Napier & Spencer Bashhaw.

Jno. Barnett acks. deed to Wm. Barnett  
 Elias Wills acks. deed to James Cole  
 John Hancock acks. deed to Lewis Hancock  
 John Hancock acks. deed to Ben. Hancock  
 Wm. Bradshaw acks. deed to Wm. Bradshaw  
 \_\_\_\_\_ acks. deed to Marbel Stone  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Nappier acks. deed to Dan Lightfoot  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Nappier acks. deed to Wine East<sup>11</sup>

Richd. Napier produced a commission to be Surveyor of this  
 County<sup>12</sup> which being read, he with Jno. Beckley & Wm. Oglesby his

<sup>10</sup>Witnesses to a deed could come to court and declare under oath that  
 they saw the seller sign the deed. Three witnesses were needed to prove a  
 deed if the grantor (seller) did not come to court and prove it himself.

<sup>11</sup>All totalled, sixty-nine deeds for 16,373 acres were proved in the  
 Fluvanna County Court in the first year of its existence. Twenty-one of  
 these deeds, of a total of 4,285, were deeds of gift, either to sons or sons-  
 in-law. One deed was for a slave and one included 195 acres plus "5 head  
 of cattle, nine pewter plates, two Basons, and one dish and Pott." See  
 Fluvanna County *Deed Book 1*, p. 63. The remaining deeds were for  
 land which sold for £5,817 or an average of nine shillings, seven pence  
 per acre.

<sup>12</sup>The Surveyor of the County, not to be confused with the surveyors of  
 the roads, was responsible for doing any surveying required by the court  
 and for surveying any unpatented land in the county at the request, and  
 cost, of the prospective patentee. He had to be licensed by the professors  
 at the College of William and Mary and was supposed to return one-  
 sixth of his fees to the College. Most did not.

securitys entd. into bond, according to law, and is sworn into his office.

The several Surveyors of the Roads<sup>13</sup> in this County [are] continued as appointed by Albemarle Court.

Ordered that the hands of Allen Cocke where Richd. Bennet is overseer, hands of Robert Payne, Julius Saunders Jr., Julius Saunders Senr., Lewis Kidd, Jno. Kidd, Moses Kid, James Webb, Edward Rice, David Wade, hands of Jno. Harris, hands of Walter King where Jno. Key is surveyor until the next Court.

Geo. Thompson acks. deed to Edwin Bain.

John Ware & Wm. Henry & Jesse Burton Gent. [are appointed] to take the list of Tithables<sup>14</sup> between Public Road from Bremono road to the Fork Ordinary from thence to Hardware River, thence to the County line—

Wilson Miles Cary, Gent. [is appointed] to take the lists of Tiths. from the front of the fork between Bremono Road & Woodson's road where they intersect.<sup>15</sup>

Roger Thompson [is appointed] to take the lists of Tiths.<sup>16</sup> between Bremono Road, Woodson's Road, and the North River up to the County line.

Geo. Thompson & Thos. Napier Gent. [are appointed] to take the list of Tithables on the North side the North River.

Geo. Thompson ack. deed to Roger Thompson

Ordered that the Surveyor of this County be employed to find the Center of this County in order for the more convenient fixing [of] the

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<sup>13</sup>The Surveyors of the Roads were the individuals charged with the responsibility for seeing that the roads were maintained. In theory a legal road had to be twenty-four to thirty feet wide, well grubbed up with the trees cut down and the stumps no more than 12 inches high! Signposts were supposed to be erected at every crossroad and ditches dug in swampy places to channel water off the road. To do all this, every tithable was supposed to work three days per year on the road to which he was assigned, or to provide tools or animals in equivalent service. The roads, of course, were terrible; impassable with mud in the winter and dusty beyond belief in the summer.

<sup>14</sup>A tithable was a person on whom a poll tax could be levied. They included all free males and all slaves, male and female, above sixteen years old. When times were hard and taxes heavy, the age for slaves was lowered to twelve and even nine years old. When times were better and taxes lighter, the age for free males was sometimes raised to twenty-one.

<sup>15</sup>Bremono Road was the lower end of the Secretary Road which ran from Carter's Bridge to Bremono Plantation on the James River. Woodson's Road was an east-west road, an extension of Venable's Road, beginning at Wilmington and crossing the Rivanna River, then passing southwest.

<sup>16</sup>Tiths.: tithables.

Court house.

Jno. Haden ackd. deed to Wm. Woody.

The Court adjourned for half an hour.

Wilson Miles Cary

At a Court held for Fluvanna 7 August 1777 according to adjournment, Prest. Mr. Cary, Mr. Ware, Mr. Roger Thompson, Mr. Henry, Mr. Geo. Thompson and Mr. Napier.

Thomas Cawthon [is] exempted from [the] payment [of] public & County levies.

John Beckly is appointed to take care of Samuel Davis a poor person 'til the election of a Vestry for Fluvanna Parrish<sup>17</sup> at £20 per annum.

Ordered that the Church wardens of Fluvanna Parrish bind John Crow a poor orphan to serve four years from this time, according to law.<sup>18</sup>

Henry Martin, Elias Wills, Turner Richardson, John Napier, Willis Wills, Robert Burton Payne, Joseph Haden, and Thomas Thurmond Gent. are recommended to the governor as proper persons to be added to the Commission of Peace for this County.

Absent Mr. Henry<sup>19</sup>

Wm. Henry Gent. is recommended to the Governor as a proper person to act as lieutenant [of the militia] of this County.

Present Mr. Henry—Absent Mr. Napier

Thomas Napier Gent. is recommended to the Governor as a proper person to act as Colonel of the Militia of this County.

Prest. Mr. Napier—Abst. Mr. Roger Thompson

Roger Thompson Gent. is recommended to the Governor as a proper person to act as Lieutenant Colonel of the Militia of this County.

Present Mr. Roger Thompson—Abs. Mr. Geo. Thompson

Geo. Thompson Gent. is recommended to the Governor as a proper person to act as Major in the militia of this County.

Present Mr. Geo. Thompson

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<sup>17</sup>The vestry and churchwardens were responsible for relief for the poor during the colonial period. When the Anglican Church was disestablished, Overseers of the Poor, elected by the residents of the precinct, took over this responsibility. During the interim between these two institutions, or whenever either failed to act, the court acted directly.

<sup>18</sup>John Crow would have been apprenticed to someone to serve for four years. Presumably Crow would have received his food, clothing, medical care and possibly some education during this period as well as a limited amount of freedom dues when his time expired.

<sup>19</sup>The records note the arrival and departure of the justices. In this case, Mr. Henry stepped down off the bench because an action in which he had a direct interest was before the court. It was the way of avoiding a conflict of interest.

Richd. Napier as Captain, Benjamin Anderson as first lieutenant, John Williamson as Second lieutenant, and Benjamin Lee as ensign in the militia of this county is recommended to the Governor.

Joseph Haden as Captain, Alexr. Moss as first lieutenant, Wm. Martin as second lieutenant, and Benja. Martin as ensign in the Militia of this county are recondmd. to the Govr.

Thomas Thurmond as Captain, Jno. Beckly as first lieutenant, John Martin as Second lieutenant, and Willm. Johnson as ensign in the militia of this county are recommended to the Govr.

John Napier as Captain, John Moseley Haden as first lieutenant, Henry Haslip as Second lieutenant, and Wm. Haden as ensign in the militia of this county are recommended to the Governor.

George Duncan as Captain, Daniel Tilman as first lieutenant, Jesse Moore as Second lieutenant, and Thomas Wynne as Ensign in the militia of this county are recommended to the Govr.

The same justices who are appointed to take the lists of tithables are appointed to tender tests to the inhabitants of this county in their respective precincts.<sup>20</sup>

The Court adjourned 'till the Court in course, to be held at the house of Thomas Staples.

Wilson Miles Cary<sup>21</sup>

At the house of Thomas Staples in Fluvanna County on this day of September 1777, a new Commission of the Peace and also Comn. of Oyer and Terminer bearing date the 22nd day of August last past, were produced and read: Whereupon Wilson Miles Cary Gent. therein named took the oath of a justice of the Peace, and also of a justice of oyer and terminer, which were administered to him by John Ware and George Thompson, Gent. and then the Sd. Wilson Miles Cary administered the Sd. oaths to John Ware, William Henry, George Thompson, Thomas Napier, Jesse Burton, Elias Wills, Turner Richardson, John Napier, Willis Wills, Robert Burton Payne, Jos. Haden and Thos. Thurmon who took the same.

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<sup>20</sup>An oath each adult man was required to take, swearing no allegiance to George III of Great Britain, but complete allegiance to the State of Virginia.

<sup>21</sup>The presiding justice had to sign the minutes of the session after they were read aloud to the assembled people attending. If the minutes were in error, they were immediately corrected. Once signed, they were the legal record of the court and were in force from that time.

At a Court held for Fluvanna County on thursday the 4th day of September 1777.

Present

Wilson Miles Cary  
John Ware  
William Henry  
Geo. Thompson  
Thos. Napier  
Jesse Burton  
Elias Wills

Turner Richardson  
John Napier  
Willis Wills  
Robt. B. Paine  
Jos. Haden  
Thos. Thurmon

Gent. Justices<sup>22</sup>

John Timberlake sworn and admitted Deputy Clerk of the peace of this County.

Absent Elias Wills Gent.

Elias Wills Gent. ackd. Deed to Jos. Lambert & O. R.

An Indre<sup>23</sup> etc. from Peter Bernard and Agness his Wife to Antho. Haden, prvd by Wits. & OR.

An Indre etc. from Jos. Adams to Thos. Roundtree proved by James Adams, Jr. & Thomas Adams and ordered to be Certified.<sup>24</sup>

John Moon ackd. Deed to John Strange & O. R.<sup>25</sup>

Absent Mr. Henry

William Henry Esq. appointed Lieutenant of the County of Fluvanna by Comn. from the Governor and was sworn into his Office accordingly.

Present Mr. Henry—Abst. Thos. Napier & George Thompson Gent.

Thos. Napier Esqr. as Colo.—George Thompson as Majr. of the militia of this County took the Oaths of Office.—

Richd. Napier Capt., Ben. Anderson 1st Lieutenant John Williamson 2nd Lieut. and Benja. Lee as Ensign of a Company of Militia in the County took the oaths of Office.—

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<sup>22</sup>The order in which the justices were listed was their order of importance as contained in the commission of the peace. Justices appointed later appeared at the end of the list. The chief justice or the presiding justice was the most senior justice present.

<sup>23</sup>An indenture was the technical name for a deed. It was so-called because the paper on which it was written was actually indented or cut. From medieval times to the seventeenth century, indentures were cut in half, with each party receiving a half. Without both halves, an indenture could not be cancelled. By the time Fluvanna County was formed, the term was almost meaningless.

<sup>24</sup>When a deed was proved by less than three witnesses it was certified for further proof. This meant the clerk held the deed without recording it. Whenever the third witness appeared, the deed was proved and then recorded.

<sup>25</sup>O.R. or OR: Ordered to be recorded.

Jos. Haden Captn. Alexr. Moss 1st Lieut. Wm. Marston as 2d. do. and Ben. Moss as Ensign of a Compy. of militia produced their Coms. and qualified to the same accg. to Law.

Thos. Thurmond Captn., John Bickley 1st Lieut. and Wm. Johnson Ensign of a compy. of militia qualified to their respective coms.

John Napier Captn. John Moseley Haden 1st Lieut. Henry Haslip 2d. Lieut. of a Compy. of militia produced their Coms. & qualified to the Law.

Geo. Duncan Captn., Danl. Tilman 1st Lieut. Thos. Winn Ensign of a Compy. of militia produced their Coms. and qualified to the Law.

John Barnett ackd. Deed to John Bickley wch. Ordd. to be recorded.

The List of Tiths. taken by Jesse Burton Gent. ret'd. & Ordered to be Certified.—

[The] List of tiths. taken by John Ware Gent. ret'd. wh. is Ordered to be Certified.

An Indre. etc. from John White & Mourning his Wife, to Elias Williams, proved by the Wits. & Ordd. to be recorded.

Absent Mr. Henry

On the petition of Wm. Henry Gent. and Benjamin Tindale setting forth that they have lands on both sides [of the] Hardware River whereon is convenient place to erect a Water Grist Mill, and praying that they may have leave to erect a mill thereon, Ordd. that a Jury be Summoned to view the Sd. place and report to Court accg. to law.

Present—Wm. Henry Gent.

Henry Martin is exempted from the payment of levies for his Negro fellow Jess for the future.<sup>26</sup>

Benj. Woodson's Deed to Geo. Anderson Junr. proved by the Wits. & OR.

For reasons appearing to the Court Thos. Baber is exempted from payg. Levies for his Son Stanley during his infirmity.

John Martin ackd. deed to Wm. Martin & OR.

Elias Williams ackd. deed to John Pace & Ordd. to be recorded.

On the petition of Thos. Roundtree setting forth that he has lands on one side of My Chunk Run whereon is a convenient place to erect a Water Grist Mill, and praying that an acre of land opposite thereto, the possession of James Adams Gent. may be laid off for such purpose—Ordd. that the Shff. summon a Jury to view and value an acre of the Sd. land & etc. and report to the Court accg. to law.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Jess was probably overage or infirm and no longer capable of performing any work.

<sup>27</sup>Roundtree was requesting a writ of *ad quod damnum* which literally means to whose damage. This writ would establish the value of the acre of land and, if approved, by the court, permit Roundtree to purchase it at that price. It also would establish the damages which would accrue to any other property owner and require Roundtree to pay them.



Absent Geo. Thompson Gent.

Leonard Thompson is recommended to the Governor as a fit person to act as Capt. of the Militia of this County.

Present Geo. Thompson Gent.

Henry Martin as first Lieut. Jas. Adams Junr. as 2nd Lieut., Anthy. Haden as Ensign of a Compy. of Militia are recommended to the Governor.

Thos. Tindale is recommended to his Excellency the Governor as fit and proper to serve as 2nd Lieut. of a Compy. of Militia under Capt. Duncan in the room of Jesse Moore who refuses to qualify.

Absent Wilson M. Cary & John Ware Gent.

Wilson Miles Cary & John Ware Gent., Wm. Oglesby and Richard Napier being elected Vestrymen for Fluvanna Parish, qualified the same accordingly.

Thos. Napier, Gent., William Basket, Benjamin Lee and Benjamin Martin who were elected Vestrymen for Fluvanna Parish came into Court and refused to qualify themselves as such, professing themselves to be dissenters from the Church of England.

Present Wilson Miles Cary & John Ware Gent.

Absent Elias Wills, Gent.

Elias Wills qualified himself as a Vestryman for Fluvanna Parish.

Turner Richardson Gent. is appointed to assist Roger Thompson Gent. in taking List of Tiths. and administg. the Test Oath.

On the motion of Elias Wills for an alteration proposed to be made in a road intended to be opened through his land, Ordered that Richard Omohundro, Jos. Wollin, John Seay and Stephen Seay or any three of them do view the sd. intended alteration and make report thereof to Court.<sup>28</sup>

Present Elias Wills Gent.

A report of a View for a road to be opened from the Fork Ferry landing to Louisa Court house, in pursuance of an order of Albemarle Court was produced & ret'd. Ordd. that a Road be opened & established according to the Sd. Report, and Ordd. that the hands of Samuel Martin under Thos. Martin, also the hands of Lewis Burwel Martin under Saml. Hensley, likewise the hands of Mr. John Ashlin, John Clark, Jacob Clark, Benjamin Clark, Edmond Lilly, William Lilly, Wm. Hughes's hands under Jos. Johnson, David Clarkson, John Robinson, Jos. Haden, Murray Pearce, Richd. Adams' hands under Green Richardson, Robert Richardson, Tandy Rice, Austin Waber, William Lowry, Absalom Lowry, Joel Lowry, and Aaron Lowry are allotted to

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<sup>28</sup>Any landowner could petition for a road to be opened, changed or closed. If the court approved, then the justices appointed persons to view the proposed change of road and report to the court the effect the change would have upon the landowners and the public.

open the Sd. Road under the direction of the above named Jos. Haden Gent. who is appd. Surveyor thereof.<sup>29</sup>

On the motion of Benja. Martin for a Road to be opened from the Old Road near Mrs. Lyles's along a Path way by Elias Wills's down to Amos's Falls, on the North River, from thence along a path to the Fork Road near the Mill path of Wilson M. Cary Gt.<sup>30</sup> Ordered that Thos. Appleberry, Wm. Appleberry, Wm. Martin and Absalom Appleberry or any 3 being first Sworn to view the Sd. way, and report to Court accg. to Law.

Ordd. that the Court be adjd. 'till Court in course.

Wilson Miles Cary

Ordd. that the Clerk procure records for the use of this County and that he be reimbursed the expenses thereof at laying of County Levy.

The Court having under consideration the fixing upon a place of a Court house are of opinion that John Ware, Willis Wills, Turner Richardson, Jos. Haden and Wilson Miles Cary Gent. be appointed to view & examine where the most convenient place may be for erectg. a Court house, and same is ordered accordingly and that they report their proceedings to the next Court.

It appearing to this Court that there is a quantity of Salt amtg. to 37 Bushels belonging to this County, now in the possession of Doctr. Gilmore and Richard Anderson of Albemarle, also 16 Bushels at Richmond, Ordered that Anthony Haden, John Strange and Willis Wills do make application for the Said Salt and procure it to be brought into this County and make distribution thereof among the inhabitants of the Sd. County in proportion to the No. of Whites, and make return of the same to this Court.

At a Court held for Fluvanna County at the House of Thos. Staples Octr. 2d 1777.

Present

Wilson Miles Cary

Geo. Thompson

Thos. Napier

Jesse Burton

and

Elias Wills

Gent. Justices

On the motion of Shadrack Oglesby Ordered that his Tiths. be added to the List taken by Jesse Burton, Gent. (2 tiths. 454 acres).

List of Tiths. & vouchers taken by Wilson Miles Cary Gent. ret'd. & ordd. to be certified.

<sup>29</sup>This road began at Columbia and proceeded north toward the Louisa line.

<sup>30</sup>Old Road: Venables Road. Mrs. Lyles's: Wilmington. Elias Wills: Owned Rivanna River plantation in "The Bend" that became Chatham and Woodlawn. Mill path of Wilson M. Cary Gt.: His Mill was on Cary Creek.

Willis Wills Esqr. produced a Comn. dated 26th Sept. last appointing him Coroner of Fluvanna Cty. and took the oath of office.

Report of a view on an Alteration proposed to be made in a Road to be run thro' the Land of Elias Wills Gent. ret'd. and read, Ordered that the Alteration be made agreeable to the Sd. Report.

Martin Key Gent. is appointed Surveyor of the Road in the room of John Key.

Ordered that a Grand Jury be Sum'd. to appear at the next Court.<sup>31</sup>

Ordered that the County Levy be laid at the next Court and that the Shff give public notice thereof.

Willis Wills, Gent. Anthony Haden and John Strange are appointed to make distribution of 37½ Bushels of Salt, the proportion belonging to this County among the inhabitants thereof in proportion to the No. of Whites and that they receive at the rate of 20/pr. Bushel for the same and that they pay and discharge the several accounts against the County on account thereof and return their proceedings to the Court.

Martin Key Gent., Shff came into Court and objected against the sufficiency of the Jail.<sup>32</sup>

Geo. Duncan is appointed Surveyor of the Road from Hardware River up to Scotts Ferry<sup>33</sup> and the hands belongg. to Mrs. Burton, Richard Hall and Randolph Johnson and the Sd. Geo. Duncan are allotted to work on the Sd. Road.

William Bugg is appointed Surveyor of the Road from Bonds Ford down to Bre moth Creek<sup>34</sup> and all the Tithables living between James River and Bre mo road and above the Creek . . . and the hands of Ben. Tindale, Richd. Murry, John Goode and Richd. Perkins allotted to work on Sd. Road.

On the motion of Archd. Sneed, Ordered that Willis Wills Gent., Wm. Bug, Rainy Woodson and Benjamin Anderson, or any 3, review a way formerly ordered to be opened from Kennon's Ferry to Napiers Ford and report the conveniences and inconveniences attending the

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<sup>31</sup>The Grand Jury of twenty-four men was responsible for making presentments (indictments) of persons who had committed misdemeanors. It was both an investigating as well as indicting body.

<sup>32</sup>The Sheriff was legally responsible for the prisoners and could be sued if any escaped. By coming into court and objecting to the prison, he covered himself. When a Sheriff changed, the old sheriff would deed the prisoners to the new one, thus relieving himself of any liability for their behavior.

<sup>33</sup>Scotts Ferry: Scottsville.

<sup>34</sup>Bonds Ford: On the Hardware River. Bre moth Creek: Bre mo Creek.

Same, and also whether a more convenient way may be had.<sup>35</sup>

Present Turner Richardson & John Napier Gent.

John Alloway Strange is appointed Surveyor to open the Road from Napier's Ford to Bibee's Race Ground, in the room of Thos. Napier and Geo. Thompson Gent. and ordered that the Company formerly appointed assist in doing the same.

Ordered that the Clerk procure records for the use of this County and that he be allowed for the Same at laying the County Levy.

Benja. Fitzpatrick appd. Surveyor of a Road from the Fork Church to the County Line and Ordered that he keep the same in repair with the usual gang.

Ordered that Saml. Davis a Poor Person be put under the care of Wm. White, and that the Sd. William be paid the rate of £20 per annum, for his trouble in keeping and providing for the Sd. Saml.

The Court having under consideration of the fixing upon a place for building a Court house are of opinion that a place on the land of Wilson Miles Cary, Gent. situate on the River Hill commonly called Ashfords is the most convenient for that purpose and do fix on the sd. place accordingly, the sd. Wilson Miles Cary Gent. having agreed to make a present of a Sufficient Quantity of Land at the sd. place to the county, whereon to erect a Court house and Prison, and John Ware, Elias Wills, George Thompson, & John Napier Gent. are appointed and desired to form and project, each of them, a plan of a Court house and prison and also form an estimate of the expense that will attend the same, and produce the same to the next Court.

Henry Martin appointed first Lieut. and Anthy. Haden Ensign of a Compy. of Militia under Capt. Thompson by Coms. bearing date 4th Sept. last, took the oaths.

Ordered that Jos. Fitzpatrick Senr., John Napier Gent., Henry Heslop and Rainy Woodson or any 3 view a way for a road from the place where the County line crosses the Secys. road to the place fixed on for the Court house and report to Court, etc.

John Ware, Elias Wills, Geo. Thompson and John Napier Gent. are appd. and desired to let the building [of] a House 18 by 20 [feet] (the Body whereof to be of sawed logs) to the lowest bidder for the purpose of holding Courts till a Court house can be built.

Wm. White appd. Constable who took the Oath of Office.

David Wade appd. Constbl. who was sworn accordingly.

Ordd. that the Court be adjd. till Court in course, to be held at this place.

Wilson Miles Cary

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<sup>35</sup>Napiers Ford was on the Rivanna River between the site chosen for the Court House and Price's Hill.

At a Court held for Fluvanna County, at the House of Thomas Staples on Thursday the 6th day of November 1777.

Prest.

John Ware

Elias Wills

Turner Richardson

Willis Wills

George Thompson

Gent. Justices.

The Last Will and Testament of George Thompson Gentl. decd.<sup>36</sup> was presented in Court by Wm. Paine & Roger Thompson executors therein named who made Oath thereto accg. to Law and the sd. Will being also proved by the Oath of Thos. Lynthicom a Witness thereto who made oath that he saw James Sexon a Witness thereto sign the same as such in the presence and at the request of the Testator and ordered to be recorded, and the sd. Executors performing what is usual on such cases, Certificate is granted for obtg. a probate thereof in due form. Bond Ackd.

Ordered that Henry Martin, John Moseley Haden, Wm. Haden & John Moody or any 2 appraise the Estate of George Thompson Decd. and report the same to Court.

Nancy Hix Wife of James Hix a Soldier in the Service of this County being very poor and having 2 Small Children petitions the Court for Support. Ordered that Wm. Amos apply to the Treasurer of this Commonwealth for the sum of £8 and that he lay out the Same in necessaries for their support one year.

List of Tiths. taken by Turner Richardson Gent. ret'd. with the Vouchers and Ordd. to be certified.

List of Tiths. taken by Thos. Napier Gent. ret'd. with the Vouchers and Ordered to be certified.

A grand Inquest for the Body of this County being impannelled, the Court appointed Tunstal Quarles foreman who was sworn, and then the rest of the Jury to wit: James Coles, Thos. Appleberry, Marvel Stone, Benja. Thacker, John Clark, Jos. Johnson, Wm. Paine, John Haden, Abner Bernard, Caleb Stone, Thomas Shores, Patrick Napier, Elias Williams, Tandy Ford, John Moody, John White, William Haden, Robert Napier, Wm. Amos, & Henry Heslop who were also Sworn, and having recd. their charge withdrew and after Some time ret'd. and made their presentments. Ordered the Several offenders be summoned to appear at the next Court to answer the Same.

Anthony Askew is allowed at the rate of £12 annum for taking care of and providing for Francis Thacker a poor person from the 10th of August last past.

Jos. Wollin, Richard Omohundro & Stephen Sea, are added to Willis Wills Gent. to review a Road Petitioned for at the last Court by

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<sup>36</sup>George Thompson (kinsman of George Thompson, the Justice) was killed while serving in the militia during the Revolution.

Archd. Snead from Kennons Ferry to Napiers Ford in the room of the Gent. then appointed and ordered that they or any 3 report to Court agreeable to the sd. Order.

William Williams, Junr. appointed Surveyor of the Road from Great Bremo to Cary Creek and Ordered that the Hands under Fisher Bennet oversr. for John Hartwell Cocke, Jos. Woolin, Stephen Sea, Charles Richards, Richd. Omohundro, Benjamin Kid & John Cawthorn do work on the sd. Road.

Silvanus Bryant appointed Surveyor of the Road from his Ford<sup>37</sup> to Goochland Line and the Hands of Saml. Martin (between Woodson's Road and the No. River) William Martin, Benjamin Martin and Elias Wills Gent. are allotted to work on the sd. Road.

Danl. Allegree appointed Surveyor of the Three Notched Road from Albemarle Line to Louisa Line as far as it is in this County, and the Hands of the sd. Allegre, Anthony Haden, Wm. Howard, James Adams, Junr., Thos. Denton, Wm. Denton, George Haggard & Archd. Napier are allotted to work on the sd. Road, also the Hands of John Maysil, Patrick Morton and Nathl. Gilbert.

Ordered that Wm. White be sumd. to appear at the next Court to Shew cause why he has not taken care of Saml. Davis a poor person agreeable to his agreement with the last Court, & order of the Same.

John Alloway Strange is allowed at the rate of £20 per annum for taking care of an providing for Saml. Davis a poor person from the 26th August last to the present day.

Roger Thompson Gent. (one of the persons named in the Comn. of the peace) took the . . . of a Justice of Peace and also the Oath of a Justice of Oyer & Terminer.<sup>38</sup>

John Timberlake is appointed Assistant Surveyor by a Comn. bearing date the 31st Oct. last who was sworn accordingly.

Ordered that William Williams, Junr. and Benjamin Lee with their respective companies keep the bridge over Cary Creek in proper repair. Green Clay Sworn & admitted under Shff in this County.

Pat. Napier's Tiths. added to the List (1 tith. 350 acres Land).

Ordd. that the Court be adjd. till Court in course.

George Thompson

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<sup>37</sup>Bryant's Ford was later the site of the Rivanna Mills.

<sup>38</sup>Roger Thompson was present and took the oath in August, but was away with the militia in September when the second oath was taken.

At a Court of Oyer & Terminer held at the House of Thos. Staples in Fluvanna County on the 25th day of November 1777 for the examination of Elizabeth Orphan on suspicion of murder.

Prest.

Geo. Thompson

John Napier

Jesse Burton

Willis Wills

Elias Wills

Gent.

Elizabeth Orphan being committed to the Custody of the Sheriff of this county by a mittimus under the hand and Seal of Willis Wills Gent. one of the Justices for the Sd. County on Suspicion of feloniously murdering her own child Thos. Orphan on the 13th day of this instant Novr. who bg. led to the Bar on her arraignment pleaded not guilty. Whereupon the Court proceeded to examine Several Witnesses against her, and a Coroner's Inquest taken on the Body of the Sd. Thos. Orphan was produced and read as evidence in consideration whereof it is the opinion of this Court that the Sd. prisoner is guilty of the fact aforesaid and that she ought to have a further trial before the Court of Oyer & Terminer to be held in Williamsburg in December next. Therefore Ordered that she be committed to the custody of the Shff of this County, and that the Sd. Shff as soon as conveniently may be, remove her to the public Goal of this Commonwealth—

Roger Thompson and John Moseley Haden came into Court & severally acknowledged themselves indebted to his Excellency Patrick Henry Esq. Governor or Chief Magistrate of the Comn. wealth of Virginia and to his successors in the sum of £10 each to be levied on their several & respective Lands & Tenements, Goods & Chattels and to the use of the State aforesd. rendered upon this condition that if the Sd. Roger Thompson and John M. Haden shall make their personal appearance before the Court of Oyer & Terminer to be held at Wmsburg in December next and then and there give evidence against Elizabeth Orphan and shall not depart thence without leave of the Sd. Court: then this Recognizance to be void, otherwise to remain in full force.

Ordered that the Depositions of Roger Thompson Gent. and John Haden be taken in behalf of the Com. wealth agst. Elizth. Orphan and transmitted to Wmsburg etc. which were accordingly taken in open Court.<sup>39</sup>

Geo. Thompson

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<sup>39</sup>This is an excellent example of the report of a court of Oyer and Terminer.

At a Court held for Fluvanna County December the 4th, 1777—  
Present

George Thompson  
Elias Wills  
Turner Richardson

Robert B. Paine &  
Jos. Haden

Gent. Justices

A Deed Poll from Elizabeth Napier to Molly Stone ackd. & O.R.  
Ordd. that Vincent Sprouce, William Sprouce and Henry Sprouce  
be added to the List of Tithabs. taken this present year.

Ordd. that Andrew Defoe be added to the List of Tiths.

Ordd. that John Haden's Tiths. be added to the List being in all 11  
Tiths and 1040 Acres [of] Land

Ordd. that Wm. Denton's Tiths. be added to the List being 3 in No.

Ordd. that Marbel Stone's Tiths being 2 and 200 Acres [of] Land be  
added to the List.—

Ordered that Danl. Paine's & Rob. Wrights Tiths. be added to the  
List.

Edmond Napier the Same. Thos. Shores the Same.

Ordd. that the Tiths. belg. to Saml. Kidd be added to the List.

Ordd. that the Tiths. belonging to Absalom Applebury be added to  
the List.

Juluis Sanders Jr. Tiths. added to the List

Geo. Butler's Tiths. added to the List.

Ordered that John Alloway Strange deliver to John Beckley 1  
Gallon of the County Salt, it appearing to this Court that the same is due  
to the Sd. Beckley.

Vincent Sprouce Senr. is exempted from the paymt. of County &  
Public Levies for the future.

Benja. Thackers Tiths added to the List.

A report of a Review of a Road from Kennons Ferry to Napiers Ford  
being retd. and read, Ordered that the same be recorded and that a road  
be opened and established agreeable to the sd. report, and Jos. Wollin is  
appointed Overseer of a Compy (in the room of Charles Richards) in  
conjunction with Archd. Sneed to open the sd. Road from Kennons  
Ferry to a White Oak marked Standing near the head of John  
Woodsons Old Field, and Rene Woodson & Benjamin Anderson are  
appd overseers of a Company formerly allotted them to open the sd.  
Road from Napier's Ford to the place last mentioned, agreeable to the  
sd. report.

Ordd. that Benjamin Fitzpatrick's Tiths. be added to the List.

On the petition of Anthony & William Haden setting forth that they  
have lands on both sides of Cunningham Creek in this county, whereon  
is a convenient place to build a Water Grist Mill and praying that they  
may have leave to do the same without the formality of a Jury, it  
appearing to this Court, that the building of the sd. mill will not  
prejudice any person, leave is given the sd. Petitioners to erect a mill on



the Land aforsd. agreeable to [the] act of Assembly in that case made & provided.

On the motion of Patrick Napier for an alteration to be made in a road from Napiers Ford to the Horse Shoe Branch, Ordered that Elias Wills Gent., James Cole, Landy Lindsay, & Tunstall Quarles or any 3 being first sworn do view the sd. Road, and Report to Court accg. to Law.

For reasons appg. to this Court, Anthy Asque is exempted from Workg on public roads.

Dilmus Johnson appointed Constable in this County, who was sworn into his office.

John Goode is appd. Surveyor of the Road in the room of Geo. Duncan, and the hands belonging to Benjamin Tindale, Richard Perkins, Richard Murray and Martin Key are added to the former Gang.

John Timberlake havg. failed to give Bond & Secy. at the last Court for the performance of the Office of Assistant Surveyor as the Law directs, this day entered into Bond with John Cobbs and Pat. Napier his Secy. and Ackd. the Same, and then took the Oath of Office—and Ordd. that the sd. Bond be recorded.

On the motion of Richard Napier County Surveyor praying that a Book may be procured for the purpose of entering Plotts agreble. to law, Ordd. that John Timberlake do procure a proper Book and that he be allowed for the Same at the laying the County Levy.

For reasons appearing to the Court Ordered that the presentments of the Grand Jury made at the last Court against sundry persons be quashed.<sup>40</sup>

William White beg. summoned to appear at this Court to shew cause why he did not take into his Care Saml. Davis a poor person agreble. to his contract with this Court, appeared, and it appears to this Court that the Sd. William is excusable, and Ordd. that he be excused and discharged from his engagement.

Ordd. that the County Levy be laid to-morrow, and that the Shff give public notice thereof.

Ordd. that the Court be adjd. 'till to-morrow morning, 10 o'clock—  
Geo. Thompson

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<sup>40</sup>Why this occurred is not clear. Although it was not uncommon to have individual persons who were named in the indictment (or presentment) not prosecuted, it was most unusual to have all of them not prosecuted.

At a Court continued and held for Fluvanna County the 5th day of Decemr. 1777.

Present

Geo. Thompson

Elias Wills

Turner Richardson

John Napier &

Jos. Haden

Gent. Justices

Ordd. that the hands of Colo. Cary at his Lower Plantation on the East side the River be added to the Compy. under Silvanus Bryant Oversr. [of the] Road from Bryant's Ford to Goochd. County Line.

Ordd. that Champion Napier receive into his care Saml. Davis a poor person, and make proper provision and accomodation for him for which he is to receive at the rate of £20 pr. annum. And it is further Ordered that the Sd. Champion do furnish the Sd. Saml. with convenient Clothing, and exhibit his charge to this Court, in order for allowance in laying the County Levy.<sup>41</sup>

Richard Napier, Anthony Haden & Benjamin Anderson are recommended to his Excellency the Governor as proper persons to be added to the Comn. of the Peace for this County.

Ord. that the hands of Geo. Thompson Gent. be added to the Company under John Beckley Oversr. of the Road from Bibee's Race Ground to the 3 Notched Road.

Ordd. that the Court be adjd. 'till Court in Course.

Geo. Thompson

At a Court held for Fluvanna County on Feby. the 5th 1778—<sup>42</sup>

Prest.

Wilson Miles Cary

John Ware

Geo. Thompson

Thos. Napier

Jos. Haden

Thos. Thurmond

Gent.

Thos. Miller with the approbation of the Court took the Oath of an Atto. at Law etc.

Thos. Miller is recommended as a fit and proper person to act as an Attorney for the Commonwealth in this County.

Randolph Johnson added to the List of Tiths.

Judith Martin, wife of Henry Martin came into Court and relinquished her right of dower to certain Lands by them conveyed to

<sup>41</sup>Each month orders were given to secure proper care for this poor person. This was typical of problems which remained unresolved despite orders by the justices month after month.

<sup>42</sup>During the early years of the County no court was held in the month of January—perhaps due to bad weather and the road conditions.

John Ford Junr. by deed bearing date the 8th Octr. last past and Ordd. to be recorded.<sup>43</sup>

Ordd. that Augustine Webber's tiths. be added to the List.

A deed from Saml. Davis to Sanders Sutherld. pvd. by Turner Richardson, Anthy. Haden & Benja. Thacker & admd. to record.

Marbel Stone and Mary his Wife ackd. Deed to Jos. Herndon (she being first privily exd.) and O.R.

Leonard Thompson & John Alloway Strange qualified as Vestrymen for Fluvanna Parish.

Elias Wills and Willis Wills Gent. took the Oath of a Justice of the Peace and of a Justice of Oyer and Terminer.

Edmd. Lilly and John Lilley being bound by recogce. to appear at this Court to answer the Compt. of Augustine Webber for ill treatment appeared and the Sd. Complainant appearing also, and refusing to take the Oath of Peace, or to prosecute any further, ordered that the Sd. Edmond & John be discharged from their recognizance.

Sally and Agness Woody being bound by recogce. to appear at this Court to answer the Complaint of Susanna Card for maltreatment appeared, the Sd. Susanna appearing craved the Oath of Peace, which was administered to her in open Court and ordered that the Sd. Sally & Agness enter into recognizance for their good behavior until the next Court to be held for this County.

Sally & Agness Woody, Austin Woody & Danl. Tilman came into Court and severally ackd. themselves indebted to Patrick Henry Esq. Governor or Chief Magistrate for the Com.wealth of Virga. and to his successors, the said Sally and Agness shall not be of good Behavior to all the good people of this State, and more especially to Susanna Card until the next Court to be held for this County.

Ordd. that the Chwdns. of Fluvanna Parish bind out Lucy, Reuben, Edward, Elizabeth and Susanna Thacker, base born Children of Ann Thacker as the law directs.

Ordd. that the County Levy be laid at the next Court and that the Shff. give public notice thereof.

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<sup>43</sup>A married woman had a dower right in one-third of the lands her husband owned while she was married to him. If she survived him she could sue for, and obtain, the use of this third for her lifetime even if her husband had sold them. To protect against this, purchasers had wives come into court and relinquish this right in open court without her husband being present. If he were present, she was taken aside and "privily examined" by the justices apart from her husband. Few wives indeed dared the wrath of their husbands by coming to court and refusing to relinquish their right of dower, but more than a few refused to come to court and threatened not to relinquish their rights. In that case, the purchaser took his chances, he had no other alternative.

John Ware, Wm. Henry, Elias Wills, Jos. Haden & Thos. Thurmond Gent. or any 3 are desired to view & examine where the most convenient place may be had to build a Court house & report their proceedings to Court.

Ordd. that the Court be adjd. till Court in course.

Wilson Miles Cary

At a Court held for Fluvanna County the 5th day of March 1778

Present

Wilson Miles Cary

Roger Thompson

George Thompson

Jos. Haden

Thos. Napier

Elias Wills

Turner Richardson

Gent. Justices

The Court proceeds to lay the County Levy:

Fluvanna County ..... Dr.

lbs. Nt. Tobo.

To John Cobbs Clk. for Public Services 6 Mths.

624 @ 2d. £ 5- 4- 0

To Martin Key Gt. Shff.

for Ditto

624 @ 2d. 5- 4- 0

To Willis Wills Gent. Coroner, pr. acct., 133 lb. gro. Tobo.

@ 1½d. 0-16- 7½

To David Wade Constable pr. acct. 50

@ 1½d. 0- 6- 3

To John Cobbs Clk. pr. acct. 200

@ 1½d. 1- 5- 0

To Martin Key, Gent. Shff. pr. acct. 305

@ 1½d. 1-18- 1½

To Turner Richardson, pr. acct.

1-13- 4

To Geo. Thompson Gt., pr. acct.

3-13- 6

20- 0-10

To Richard Napier, Gent. Surveyor Pr. Acct.

1-10- 0

To be raised for the purpose of defraying the expence of Public Buildings and to remain in the Shff's hands till further Orders

150- 0- 0

To David Staples pr. acco.

4- 7- 6

To the Shff for Collectg.

187-8-6 @ 6 prCt

11- 4-10¾

To be collected and remain as a Depositum

0- 5- 3¼

Cr.

187- 8- 6

By 882 Tiths. . 4/3 pr. Poll

187- 8- 6

The County Levy having been settled at 4/3 Pr. Poll, Ordered that the Shff receive as much of each tithable person in this County, and pay the same to the Several creditors before directed.

On the Petition of Danl. Tilman, leave is given him to keep an Ordy. at the place called the Fork Ordy. in this County.

Ordered that Martin Key Gent. Shff. be paid the sum of £3-18-1 for sundry services pr. acct. out of the £150 to be raised for public buildings.

Ordd. that the Court be adjd. till to-morrow, 12 o'clock.

Wilson Miles Cary

At a Court held at the House of Thos. Staples in Fluvanna County, March 23rd 1778, for the purpose of fixing on a place for a Court house, in the said County, agreeable to an Act of Assembly directing the same:

The Court having taken under their consideration the fixing on a place for a Court house are of opinion that a Ridge near the head of the Lane leading to Napier's Ford on the South side of the Rivanna River, on the lands of Colo. Thos. Napier and Capt. Patrick Napier is the most convenient place . . .

Organizations and business concerns contributing to the cost of publishing the *Bulletins* to celebrate the Bicentennial of Fluvanna County were listed in *Bulletin Number 22*. The Fluvanna County Historical Society also wishes to express appreciation to the following:

Piedmont Electric Company  
R. L. Beyer Construction Company  
Fluvanna Ruritan Club  
Three-Chopt Ruritan Club

### **FLUVANNA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS 1975-76**

President ..... Mr. J. William Siegfried  
First Vice-President ..... Mrs. Edwin O. Gooch  
Second Vice-President ..... Mr. William A. Talley, Jr.  
Secretary-Corresponding ..... Mrs. John W. Ward  
Secretary-Recording ..... Mrs. William A. Talley, Sr.  
Treasurer ..... Mrs. L. T. Richardson

#### **Members of Executive Board at Large:**

Mrs. Charles F. Coffey  
Mrs. Ellis P. Snead  
Mrs. James F. Perrin

#### **New Members since August, 1975:**

Miss Minnie Arnold, Richmond, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Bishop, Lynchburg, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. Julian Bragg, Richmond, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. James Campbell, Fork Union, Va.  
Dr. and Mrs. William B. Chapman, Palmyra, Va.  
Mrs. A. Carter Cole, Fork Union, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. Neil Fisher, Troy, Va.  
Mrs. LaVera R. Fuerst, Cincinnati, Ohio  
Mr. Ralph C. Garner, New Castle, Ind.  
Rev. Max Greene, Troy, Va.  
Mrs. Ida Griffith, Palmyra, Va.  
Mr. William S. Griffith, Richmond, Va.  
Mrs. Emma Gutowsky, Bybee, Va.  
Mrs. Asa D. Haden, Palmyra, Va.  
Mrs. Lorena Hilbert, Kents Store, Va.  
Miss Sally Louise Johnson, Charlottesville, Va.

Mrs. T. Cary Johnson, Fork Union, Va.  
Mr. Charles Wood Kent, Morristown, Pa.  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lum, Palmyra, Va.  
Mrs. Mary K. Middour, Castroville, Texas  
Mr. Ernest W. Morris, Kents Store, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. Raymond G. Orf, Breemo Bluff, Va.  
Mr. Richard Payne, Kents Store, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Shea, Fork Union, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. P. McK. Shiflett, Richmond, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Shiflett, Richmond, Va.  
Mr. Thomas Shiflett, Williamsburg, Va.  
Mr. Roderick L. Simmons, Alexandria, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Siegfried, Richmond, Va.  
Mrs. Bernice Snead, Richmond, Va.  
Mr. Edward P. Snead, Richmond, Va.  
Miss Ruth Snead, Fork Union, Va.  
Miss Santha Wade, Palmyra, Va.  
Mrs. Leslie H. Walton, Crozet, Va.  
Mr. Donald Weaver, Scottsville, Va.  
Mrs. Mabel Winn, Richmond, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woodburn, Fork Union, Va.  
Mr. and Mrs. David Wright, St. Louis, Mo.

The Fluvanna County Historical Society was founded in 1964 to collect and preserve manuscripts and other documents relating to the history of Fluvanna County in Virginia; to maintain the Old Stone Jail at the county seat, Palmyra, as a museum where antiquities of the county may be exhibited; and to encourage historical research.

Members will be notified of all meetings of the Society. Annual dues are: Single Membership, \$5.00; Family Membership, \$7.00; and Contributing Membership, \$10.00. A life membership is \$100. A bulletin is published twice a year, distributed to members free of charge. Copies can be purchased for \$2.00 single copy; \$3.00 double copy. Readers are requested to contribute any information of historical interest they may have or may be able to obtain. The Society will endeavor to publish as much of this information as may be possible.

All communications should be addressed to Mrs. Henry C. McGehee, Chairman of Publications, P.O. Box 132, Palmyra, Virginia 22963.





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*The Bulletin of the*  
**FLUVANNA COUNTY**  
**Historical Society**

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Number 25

October 1977

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**COURT HOUSE, PALMYRA, VIRGINIA**

*Built in 1830*



## POINT OF FORK ARSENAL IN 1781

### Foreword

We wish to dedicate this *Bulletin* to the late William Ronald Cocke, III, a native of Fluvanna, who prepared the first definitive account of the Point of Fork Arsenal for his home county. A copy of the unpublished manuscript is now in the Documents Room of the Old Stone Jail Museum. His paper led others to the original documents he discovered and brought to the attention of Fluvanna folk. Since Mr. Cocke loved Fluvanna and its history, we feel he would have been pleased with this latest endeavor.

\* \* \* \* \*

A compact history of the Revolutionary Arsenal at Point of Fork by Captain Richard Crouch was published in our *Bulletin of the Fluvanna County Historical Society*, Number 4, in March, 1967. In *Bulletin* Number 19, James Bradford told about "Fluvanna in the Revolution;" and *Bulletin* Number 22, "The Formation of Fluvanna," included a section about the function of the county government during the Revolution. *Bulletin* Number 24 followed more completely the Revolutionary action in Fluvanna in 1781, especially the British raid upon Point of Fork Arsenal in June of that year.

Editing or researching and writing the above *Bulletins* led us into a labyrinth of public records of the action in Virginia in 1781, which prompted the need for a depot at Point of Fork. They tell of the frantic efforts of the War Office and Commissaries to secure, distribute, and protect the supplies which were so crucial to the war effort. The documents tell of months spent moving public stores to "a safe place" — Point of Fork — only to find the British within striking distance of the precious supplies. In haste and desperation the Quartermaster officers tried to disperse the supplies, equipment, and arms to hide them from the advancing enemy. How successful were they? Accounts written in that day disagree: some cite success, others tell of failure.

Using these original documents, we venture to tell the story of Point of Fork from a different viewpoint, a view that tells of the efforts of unsung heroes to support the legendary generals and their troops. Any account of the two days Lieutenant Colonel Simcoe spent at Point of Fork endeavoring to destroy the Arsenal is only a part of the story. The fact that Baron von Steuben had just arrived there to train a very few raw recruits is important to the story, for he did help move the supplies across the Fluvanna (James) River; but he never considered the protection of the military stores his responsibility. The Prussian was there to train men for battle.

At the heart of the story of Point of Fork are the carpenters, the

artificers and armorers, the blacksmiths, boatwrights, wheelwrights, wagonmasters, cobblers, tailors, and the commissary officers who collected food and fiber. We could not include as many references as we wished, but the records give a broad view of the modes and problems of transportation, the uniforms the troops wore, and the food they ate. Many details of colonial life were given, such as an outbreak of smallpox, the scourge of both soldier and civilian. However, this Bulletin may be of greater interest if read in conjunction with Numbers 4 and 24.

We are grateful to Deborah Murdock and Elizabeth Butler for their help. Following their leads, our research was done in the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia. The two main sources are *The Calendar of State Papers* and *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. A few items of information are from *The Journal of the Council* and *Hennings Statutes*. Due to the costs of publication, the volume and page numbers have not been given; however, we endeavored to give the dates of all references used.

Minnie Lee McGehee

Palmyra, Virginia  
August, 1977

## POINT OF FORK ARSENAL IN 1781

The junction of two rivers was always important geographically. It was a landmark. The land in the forks of a river was much prized for commerce. Point of Fork was such a site, for here the rivers the early settlers named the Rivanna and the Fluvanna met to form "the mighty James." Here lies Fluvanna's most important Revolutionary War site, the premises of the Point of Fork Arsenal, which was the focal point of British raiding parties in 1781.

We do not know when the first white men saw the Fork, but the first who recorded the site were a band of twenty-four men who travelled from Jamestown up the James River as far as the falls in May, 1607. These men were led by Captain Christopher Newport, and the party included Captain John Smith. When Chief Powhatan's son told them about the fork of the James, he said that an Indian village called Rassawek, the capital of the Monacan nation, was located there, a march of a day and one-half above the falls. When Captain John Smith drew a map of eastern Virginia, he included Rassawek; and the fork of the James became a recognized place.

In the early 18th century, Dudley Diggs owned the Point of Fork and built quarters for slaves there. By the 1730's, Diggs mortgaged the land to a London merchant. After much litigation, an Englishman, Walter King, purchased the land; however, King was "a loyal subject of Britain," and as the American Revolution progressed, the land was seized by the Fluvanna County Escheator for the State. David Ross, a merchant who had recently moved to Virginia, secured the 5,709 acres in 1780.

By this time, he was deeply committed to the colonial cause, but it is not known whether the land was bought as a possible site for a Revolutionary War depot. The Point included fertile land, and the rivers served as highways to market; so Ross continued the farm operations there.

At the beginning of the war, Ross had been suspected of British loyalty. A native of Scotland, he was a British subject; and patriotic Virginians were suspicious because he had merchant ships trading out of Norfolk. Most of his shipping activities were confined to the West Indies trade with Virginia; but even after the British started seizing Ross's ships, he was accused of trying to turn the Indians in the western part of Virginia against the settlers. Ross was gradually cleared of suspicion and acquired valuable property in Virginia, receiving permission to become a citizen of the state. By 1779, he had acquired the Oxford Iron Works in Campbell County and was bringing iron down the James River in flatbottomed boats to supply the public foundry at Westham.

The Virginia Council appointed David Ross to the office of Commercial Agent for the State on December 27, 1780, just nine days before the British, under General Benedict Arnold, destroyed the

foundry at Westham and all the supplies there and in Richmond. When Jefferson and the Council had recovered from the shock of the sudden British raid, Jefferson wrote Ross on February 2, 1781:

Sir: I do myself the pleasure of enclosing your appointment as Commercial Agent to this State . . . The General Assembly have by this act declared that they will make good all your engagements and thereby pledged the faith of the State to supply any deficiency of the Funds put into your hands or any accidental losses which may occur. To this I have only to add an assurance that every aid and facility shall be furnished you which are in the power of the Executive . . .

Ross was the logical choice, for his mineral, naval, and mercantile interests had already involved him in procurement projects for the State. He served Virginia as Commercial Agent until April, 1782.

Evidently there never was a formal agreement between Ross and the State for purchase or rent of land in the Point. Temporary buildings, and then more permanent structures, were erected as Point of Fork became the State Arsenal. (This was Virginia's main arsenal until it was closed in January, 1801.)

David Ross wrote asking for compensation from the State on February 24, 1783. He stated that the "Public" had erected several buildings upon his estate in Fluvanna, and no terms had ever been established for this and other property of his which was converted to public use. He declared he would not "trouble the Executive with an Estimate" of his losses when the British destroyed the public stores at his estates, as he thought "private interest should bend to public good," but he "trusts it will be thought proper to appoint some persons to treat with me in regard to the occupancy of this property, purchased by myself, and the use of the wood and other things necessary to maintain the Post at that Place."

Apparently no action was taken on Ross's request until November 8, 1786, when the State approved part of the charges. They allowed one hundred pounds for ground rent from the year 1780 to August 18, 1786, and three pounds, ten shillings for wheel timber and building timber used for a "small magazine" and a smoke house. Only fifty pounds were paid for fire and coal wood [charcoal], and no payment was made for houses injured when the Magazine was blown up. The State also refused to pay for "woods, pasturage, and ground spoiled by brick making."

\* \* \* \* \*

### **The Task of the Commercial Agent**

When David Ross became Commercial Agent for Virginia in 1780, he assumed a most demanding position. It was his responsibility to secure supplies for the armies; and in doing so, he made Point of Fork a supply depot. He must locate and buy all the diverse supplies including food,

clothing, and shelter for the troops. In addition, he must find the raw materials for making tools and arms or purchase them already made. Much of the ore, of course, came from his own mines. His task was aggravated by the fact that the British had just destroyed so many supplies around Richmond in January, 1781, and were still interfering with the movement of ships needed to bring supplies into the State.

A few excerpts from letters of the early months of 1781 outline his task and his problems. A list prepared on January 12 is an example.

The Deputy Quartermaster reported some of the supplies which had been moved to safety before the enemy raid on Richmond and Westham:

Seventy-six kettles, chests of tools, Blacksmith's bellows, axes, tin ware, knives, blank books, and bales of hemp.

Military stores saved: One hundred muskets, three waggon loads of powder in barrels, canisters and cartouch boxes, bayonets in large quantities, flints, lead, screws, brushes, and horseman's swords.

And Commissary Stores: Two hundred barrels of flour, bread, four Tierces of Rum, Taffy, Brandy, etc.

On February 12, David Ross wrote the Governor that he had just dispatched a wagon with "tent stuff and cloth" for Colonel Buford's troops, had an agent at South Quay in search of blankets and other woolens, and "will make every endeavor to procure the articles referred to by your Excellency, in order that the troops may take the field like soldiers." Ross had heard "the Troops at Chesterfield Courthouse are very naked, and destitute of almost every thing . . . About Wednesday next I will send to Alexandria an account of the tobacco purchase, and will procure such articles as cannot be gotten here." He had written to a shoe factory to know what quantity they could furnish weekly. He added: "Hats cannot be got, and caps must be made for the men." Tents, cloth, blankets and woolens, clothing, shoes, and hats — Ross had a stupendous task!

Ross reported on January 9 that in the stores for Baron von Steuben's troops there were "only twenty-seven barrels of flour and about twenty barrels of Biscuit;" and on the next day the Baron applied for "150 Tents, 200 Camp Kettles," and other supplies.

On January 13, the army hospital requested wine, tea, sugar, coffee, rice, molasses, and "daily rations of fresh meat absolutely required for the sick."

"Spirits" were much in demand, for the wagonmasters refused to move the military stores unless supplied with sufficient liquor for the drivers. There was no one who would work without a guarantee of good pay; however, the public credit was bad and the currency inflated. For instance, horses cost as much as 500 pounds each in paper currency.

Ross found tailors at Chesterfield Court House who would make soldiers' coats (January 13), but the women thought the pay offered for



making shirts was too low. The women were finally paid \$20 for each shirt made. The soldiers were often so ill-equipped and ragged that they deserted. A report from Prince Edward on February 23 stated: "... soldiers received not a single farthing or an article of clothing for one year; they are all as Naked as when they were born."

Horses, wagons, and wagonmasters were scarce; tents, nails, saddles, and bridles were much needed. The state was begging for artisans and craftsmen of all kinds, especially cobblers and carpenters. By January, 1781, women were working in the gun factory in Fredericksburg.

In January, Colonel William Davies, Commissary officer, complained of the waste of tents and clothing. He wanted all coats patched and shoes re-soled. Leather was scarce, and by March Davies proposed to use deer hides. On March 30, a woman who ran a tanyard offered leather to the Commissary if they could find a supply of bark for tanning. She had delivered 1,000 hides for the use of the State and had 2,000 more cured and dried ready to tan.

A letter written by Ross on April 6 gives an excellent insight into the perplexities of his duties. He had received an estimate of the equipment needed for the Virginia line of 4,500 men. He wrote of the "exhausted condition of the Treasury," and the "distressed situation of our trade due to the late operations of the Enemy . . . Estimates must be based upon what can be had, not upon what is actually needed." He thought "Russian sheeting or canvass shortcoats and vests, with scarlet capes & cuffs would make an agreeable wear & tolerable figure for the summer . . . and perhaps woolens can be got for the winter . . ."

\* \* \* \* \*

### **A Superhuman Effort**

The story of Point of Fork Arsenal and Barracks is found in the records of the efforts of the Commissary officers to supply the Continental and State troops during the Revolution. The ultimate responsibility for supplying the troops with food, clothing, and necessary equipment fell on Governor Jefferson, the Council, and the War Office. The task was tedious and frustrating. All through the spring of 1781, clamoring letters to Jefferson poured into Richmond as the supply units endeavored to recover from the British raid of January. The records show a superhuman effort under insurmountable circumstances, but Jefferson's administration was much criticized for their handling of the problems of supplies for the armed forces. The British raids in central Virginia coincided with the last days of Jefferson's term; and he left office under a cloud, with the government organization in disarray and the supply projects in chaos.

To add to the frustration, the Generals in the field were concerned only with their immediate needs and never agreed with the long-range

planning of the Commissaries. For instance, General Lafayette wrote the Governor on May 12, 1781, asking that the men and tools engaged in building storehouses at Point of Fork be diverted to serve his troops.

General von Steuben complained bitterly about the flow of supplies under the direction of Colonel George Muter, Commissioner of the War Office, and finally made an official charge against him for misconduct of his office.

Needs of the State and needs of the Continental Army caused conflict, such as the demand for wagons to move military stores from the Richmond area in April and May. The War Office complained to Jefferson on April 21 that the troops had most of the wagons the State had been able to acquire:

This is one of the ill consequences of the State's depriving itself of the means of transportation, as it subjects us to the hazard of losing very valuable stores, mainly because the Continental officers, who have got almost all our waggons, choose to remove stores of little value that *have* been delivered to them, in preference to those of great worth which *have not* been actually delivered to them, altho' purchased expressly & solely for Continental purposes.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **The Beginning**

The earliest mention of Point of Fork in *The Calendar of State Papers* referred to it as a head of navigation, as in July, 1779, Theodorick Bland received barrelled beef which was sent "in canoes up James Rives to a place called Point of Fork, where it was placed in waggons" and moved westward.

Again it is mentioned as a head of navigation by Governor Jefferson on January 15, 1781, when he asked owners of sawmills to send lumber "to the fork of the River" to be brought to Richmond to rebuild the public storehouses, magazines, laboratory, and shops which the British had destroyed at Westham.

The records do not make clear just how much rebuilding was done at Westham before the military stores and damaged arms were moved to Point of Fork. On January 22, seven days after the Governor's plea for workmen and lumber, the first action was taken for a post at Point of Fork. Colonel George Muter, War Office Commissioner at Richmond, informed the Governor:

Mr. Milton Ford is now here and ready to hire carpenters for the works at the 'Forks of James River.' He and his brother Samuel will undertake the buildings at that place, to be assisted by his father. Mr. Ford has already been employed in public works and has acted with much industry and punctuality.

Perhaps work at Point of Fork began almost at once, for on January

25 Colonel Muter told the Governor: "Mr. Ford desires instructions as to how the people employed at the Fork of James River are to be furnished with provisions; whether by the State, or by money to be supplied the contractors." On February 7, the Council requested the Treasurer to emit "the sum of 10,000 pounds issued by Col. Muter in favor of Milton Ford upon account."

One of the problems in securing workmen at Point of Fork, as elsewhere, involved the question of exemption from active duty in the army for men serving as artisans at State installations. In a letter to the Governor on January 25, Colonel Muter referred to the workmen employed at Point of Fork and asked what action the General Assembly had taken "in regard to exempting certain workmen, eight-months men, in the Public Laboratory from military service." The Governor replied on February 23 that the Act of Assembly "exempts all artificers in public service from military duty provided they be engaged for six months at least . . . they must be employed in public works . . . and will not exempt every person who happens to undertake to furnish the public works by the piece."

References to plans for the State Engineer to visit Point of Fork and to estimate for brick work there indicate designs for buildings and fortifications of a permanent nature. However, not all the buildings planned were completed before Cornwallis reached Petersburg on May 20, 1781.

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### **A Supply Depot at the Fork**

The first order to remove military equipment to Point of Fork is recorded on January 12, 1781, when Jefferson wrote General Weeden regarding some cannons at New Castle in Hanover. Jefferson wrote: "I had moveover ordered them to the Forks of James River as a place of safety."

Those cannons illustrate the problems and frustration of moving the military stores to Point of Fork to prevent their destruction by the British. The cannons, Jefferson said, "are without carriages and of course if mounted on batteries would be in extreme danger of being taken." Between January and the first of June, dozens of letters were written about the removal of those cannons to a place of safety. Most of the letters were written by Colonel John Syme, Patrick Henry's half-brother, to the Governor. An example is the letter of April 22:

Mason and others are after wagons — In case those cannot be had he will get ox carts . . . The canon are heavy, it takes a number of hands to move them, consequently their place of deposit will be known to the enemy if they come. They should be carried on carriages up to the Fork of the James if possible,

otherwise it were better they remain on boats to be removed as occasion may require.

Despite all the letters and the combined efforts of many people, the brass cannons were still at New Castle when Cornwallis arrived the first of June; and his men had the pleasure of destroying them . . .

The next order to remove stores to Point of Fork was given by Colonel Muter who wrote the Governor on February 28 that orders had been given to prepare a number of wagon covers for the protection of military stores to be moved to the Point of Fork.

David Ross first warned the Governor about the safety of military provisions in Virginia on February 19. Ross believed Cornwallis was trying to persuade Sir Henry Clinton to send another army from New York and wrote Jefferson, " . . . in that case Petersburg would not be safe, & I have directed that some Provisions I have in the neighborhood should be sent up to the Fork."

On April 16, Colonel Davies told Jefferson that he was persuaded of the intended movement of the enemy "up the river," and he urged the immediate removal of all the Stores at Petersburg and Chesterfield, "at least 150 waggon loads." Davies added: "The cannon at New Castle also should be carried to a place of safety Capt. Young should at once be ordered to impress waggons, and push this business!"

Also, on the same day, Major Richard Claiborne of the Continental Quartermaster, wrote Colonel Davies that he was "willing to aid in every possible way to remove the stores from Petersburg, but I have not the means of transportation."

On April 17, four blank impress warrants were given to Captain Young, Quartermaster General of Virginia, for procuring for the "purpose of removing public stores as many waggons, teams, drivers, boats, canoes, and other vessels with their navigators as shall be necessary." Later records show that a man named William Street was paid ten shillings a day for fifteen days to remove State stores from the City of Richmond to the Point of Fork.

Not only were wagons for public use scarce, but the necessary authorization and written orders to move the military arms must be secured. On April 21, Colonel Davies wrote to Jefferson:

I need not represent to your Excellency the insecurity of this place [Richmond]. The state of our arms requires security to the workmen from alarms and I am confident we shall never be able to get them repaired, unless some buildings are prepared for them in a safe place above the fall — I have conversed with Mr. Ford and Mr. Anderson [State Armorer] and they think the hands can begin to work in ten or twelve days from this time Should they be send up to the Point of Fork where Mr. Anderson is very desirous to go.

May I hope therefore for the Approbation of the Executive, in directing all the hands on the public works in this

neighborhood, to remove immediately to the Point of Fork, except only such number of Artificers to be detained at certain places as the Quarter Master General shall direct for the necessary purposes of the Troops?

Davies completed his letter by reporting that no wagons had been obtained or were likely to be obtained. Most of the wagons secured by the State had gone to the Continental troops. Despite this lack of wagons, the War Office took action the same day Davies' letter was received and approved the removal of all hands employed at the public works in the neighborhood of Richmond to Point of Fork.

In a letter to Colonel Davies on May 30, Ross told of the organization at Point of Fork in April when he heard that the public artificers were on their way. He was obliged to go to Richmond; and with no white man left on his estate, there was no one to provide for the reception, feeding and quartering of the workmen until a Commissary could be appointed. Ross "took the liberty" of detaining two men of the Goochland militia to take his place at Point of Fork.

On April 23, two days after Davies received word to move the public works to Point of Fork, he wrote the Governor that it was necessary that somebody go up to the neighborhood of the Barracks (Charlottesville) to collect the arms and take them to Point of Fork. The Governor approved and Davies contacted Lieutenant Colonel R. Lindsay in Albemarle County. On the same day Lindsay wrote to assure the War Office that he would make an attempt to collect the arms and send them to Point of Fork, but "every effort to secure canoes or batteaux had failed." (One month later, the Albemarle Commissary was "making every effort" to again move those supplies and return them to Albemarle!)

By the first of May, Major Richard Claiborne was so worried about the supplies for the Continental forces that he wrote Governor Jefferson:

I find it necessary to inform your Excellency . . . that the unsafe situation of my manufactories at the Towns upon Navigation . . . in consequence of the enemy; has obliged me to look for some retired part within the State, where such business may be conducted with ease.

I fixed upon Point of Fork and acquainted your Excellency with my intentions . . . but your Excellency was pleased to decline that approbation which I was in great hopes to have had —

Claiborne stated that Mr. Ross approved of his plan, and he would ask his assistant in that district to make an examination and report in writing. "These I shall lay before your Excellency."

Were the British pushing up the James? Should all stores be moved to Point of Fork? Captain John Peyton (later Superintendent of Point of Fork Arsenal) wrote on May 2 from Cumberland Old Court House to



*Map of Point of Fork by Lieutenant Colonel John Grave Simcoe,  
Commander of Queen's Rangers.*

— *Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg*

inform Colonel Davies that he had loaded the stores there in his own baggage wagons and ordered them to Point of Fork. His wagons were to return at once to carry off the rest if the enemy should make a move in his direction. However, he believed the British were going back down the James:

Should this be true, I think it best to detain the tailors and shoemakers with a sufficiency of material to keep them at work, until proper Houses can be built for them at the Fork, the quarters at the County House [Old Court House] being well adapted to this purpose. Please inform Mr. Ross that we will soon need linnen and Leather.

Ross wrote from Point of Fork on May 4 saying he was expecting lead to arrive there from South Quay, Carter's Ferry, and his mines to supply the needs of the workmen.

Not everyone was happy about the concentration of men and materials at Point of Fork. On May 8, Captain Henry Young, Quartermaster General for the State, wrote Colonel Davies asking that a sufficient number of State ship carpenters be sent to Point of Fork to build bateaux; and the next day he wrote complaining bitterly about the "extravagance and wanton waste of forage at Point of Fork. Also there was a great want of provisions there, but both problems might be remedied by sending a Commissary of Issues."

Four days later he wrote again, worried about the terms for paying the bricklayers at Point of Fork. It was a long letter, for he unburdened his heart about the matter of safety for the military stores:

I can't think of the Point of Fork with patience; was it a place of security, I would be willing to gratify Mr. Ross at the expense of every public advantage . . .

The Point of Fork is an improper place (because it is insecure) for us to risque everything at — let us then do right for once & center our grand views at Staunton . . . for my part I do not conceive that there is one advantage at the Fork . . .

The Governor is the best man in the world and if I mistake not open to conviction. Were you to use your influence with him I think he might be prevailed to give up Point of Fork, that will one day damn the exertions of the State . . .

P.S. I fear the navigation Colonel will induce you to be reconciled to this Point of Fork . . . If the truth could be known, we have lost as many stores by attempting to convey them by water, as would have purchased twenty wagons & Teams . . . Excuse blotting, 10 persons are in the room —

Ross was having good luck securing arms and clothing from the north — his agent in Philadelphia informed him 2,000 stands of arms would be ready at once — but a terrible time trying to move supplies westward up the James. He was quite angry when he wrote Jefferson on May 16, "by the villiany of the waggon master and the folly of one of our Light Horse

sent to conduct goods . . . to Point of Fork, the whole of them have fallen into the hands of the Enemy." He appealed to several people in authority, commands and countercommands were given, and in the confusion all efforts failed. Ross wrote that the public lost about 2,000 yards of blue, white and scarlet cloth, nearly 4,000 yards of canvas, and a ton of lead.

Meanwhile efforts were made to continue repairing arms at Point of Fork. Captain Thomas W. Ewell reported from Bolling's Ferry (Goochland) on May 19 that he had sent two canoes up the James with coal and that he had made an effort to send "the Flatt laden with old arms up, but not being able to get up over the rocks, she had to return."

Two days later Captain Young in Richmond wrote Colonel Davies at Point of Fork worrying because he heard that Mr. Anderson, the armorer at the Fork, did not have coal. He could not understand the lack, for a week before he dispatched two canoes to the Fork with sixty bushels of coal. He had sent Commissary Graves to the Fork to regulate that department.

Ross had collected hemp from the "back country" to send to Philadelphia in the wagons which would deliver the needed arms to Baron von Steuben, but on May 22 von Steuben changed the orders and wrote the conductor of the wagon train to transport the arms to Albemarle Old Court House (Scottsville) "with all possible dispatch." So the wagons did not come to Point of Fork as Ross had planned.

Captain Henry Young, the pessimistic worrier, was trying to get from Richmond to the Fork on May 23, but he could not find his horses and was afraid they had fallen into the hands of the enemy. He added:

. . . in the meantime, I have given such directions about the Canoes as I thought bet. One day I receive orders from two persons, the next day they are countermanded by twenty — I fear this regular confusion (if I may be allowed the expression) will end in our total ruin.

The supplies had to be moved for greater safety, and yet the workmen must continue to produce, so on May 25 Ross wrote from Point of Fork to Davies at Albemarle Old Court House to say he could supply Captain Peyton (clothier) with leather and that he had sent for shoe thread. He had a large supply of French canvas on hand which he thought would suit for frock coats, but it had proved to be too thick. Since they were scarce of goods, he recommended that they make short coats for the men and line them with "blue frize."

On May 26, Captain Young wrote Davies:

I shall be at the Point of Fork this evening, where I shall remain until the stores are all removed from thence — I shall be glad of your advice in the fulest manner . . . and whether you do not think it will be advisable that Anderson, with his men remain at the Point as long as possible, as arms are much wanted, and as his removal will put it out of his power to render



any service for a considerable time — A few canoes may be kept at the Point to take off Mr. Anderson's tools & Arms that will be kept to repair.

The same day Ross wrote to the Governor at Charlottesville that the greatest part of the powder belonging to the State was at Point of Fork under guard of only seven men. He added that Mr. Anderson could repair about one hundred muskets a week, but in a few days the number would increase to one hundred fifty. Von Steuben and Lafayette complained the arms were not being repaired fast enough.

Men rushed about the countryside dispersing the supplies; and on May 26 Major John Pryor, Field Commissioner, wrote that he had sent a field company of military stores to General Greene by way of Point of Fork. Although he had frequently ordered Mr. Porter to remove the stores from Carter's Ferry to Point of Fork, it had not been done, nor had they moved the ammunition from Cumberland Old Court House. He added, "The Continental and State Military Stores are so mixed that it is impossible to discriminate between them."

The next day Ross wrote from Point of Fork that the powder there should be removed at once as the risk was too great with an "insufficient house" and only seven guards. The Quartermaster was collecting canoes and wagons to remove the powder and the men were given strict orders as to caution and care.

The same day Samuel Patterson at Henderson's (on the Rivanna below Charlottesville) wrote to Davies at Albemarle Old Court House saying that he was expecting canoes to bring supplies there, and after they were unloaded he would send them to Point of Fork. He asked Davies to send instructions to the Point. Should the men move supplies up the James to Albemarle Old Court House or should they come back up the Rivanna to Henderson's? On Friday he had sent an express to the Fork, requesting all superfluous stores be sent to Henderson's as Davies had directed; however, he had since met the Governor in the road, and the Governor told him the Council ruled that all stores should be sent up the James to Albemarle Old Court House. The Governor said, "There should not be a sufficiency of Stores at Henderson's to draw the Enemy's attention . . ." Patterson added: "Would his Excellency's magnificent building be illuminated, if the Enemy should come! . . . P.S. I have found my horse, half dead, tender-footed and sore-backed—"

Stephen Southall, Assistant Quartermaster in Charlottesville agreed that the powder at Point of Fork must be moved. He secured three wagons with good covers and sent them to the Fork to move the powder to Henderson's. He had not heard that the powder should go to Albemarle Old Court House, nor had Mr. William Price at Point of Fork. Price reported on May 28: "Two hundred fifty-seven barrels of powder have been sent up to Henderson's and more will go in the Evening."

On May 24 the storekeeper made an inventory of the "State Stores" at

Point of Fork and listed,

180 yards Russia Sheeting for Overhalls, 1 piece Ozens [Osnaburg cloth], 80 pieces Irish linen, 60 ready-made shirts, 20 pieces Bareskin — 540 yards, 260 yards Plaid, 60 pair yarn stockings, 70 yards white flannel, 200 calf skins, 50 soldier coats, 70 pair Leather breeches at Mr. Bolling's Landing, 1 ps. spotted Flannell, 5 ps. Chec.

Samuel Dyer at Point of Fork also sent an inventory of stores in his possession to Davies at Albemarle Old Court House on May 29. He reported that the remainder of the supplies had come up from Bollings, but several of the packages of dry goods were damaged, and thirteen coats and ten pairs of buckskin breeches were missing from the boxes. He needed workmen to make proper packaging in order to remove the clothing farther west. From these stores the Governor ordered Ross to provide the needs of the new levies at the Fork under Baron von Steuben.

Jefferson wrote from Charlottesville, "The Clothing which came here from Philadelphia is ordered to the Point of Fork in the Waggon, which brought it. The other Waggon also proceed there." However, the Commissary officers did not agree with Jefferson's plans and diverted the wagons to the mountains. They were scurrying to remove all stores from Point of Fork, and Stephen Southall in Albemarle wrote to Colonel Davies at the Fork on May 31 to say he thought he had furnished enough wagons to transport all the stores away from Point of Fork. He advertised for more wagons and secured six canoes and three hands from Colonel Joseph Cabell. All these he sent to the Fork. He added:

The Governor told me yesterday he had consulted the members of the Assembly, and it was the universal opinion that the stores should be sent to Albemarle Old Court House, even the stores at Hendersons. I am in consequence at a loss where to be at . . .

I shall however order the loads that now lie at Henderson's to the mountains . . . There were two hundred and fifty-six barrels of powder, that came to Mr. Henderson's yesterday.

Southall also reported that the powder transported in the canoes was getting wet. The same day Captain Young learned there was trouble at Point of Fork. Captain Samuel Jones charged that a Mr. Moody had stolen blankets and clothing, tools, and money which were meant for the soldiers. Jones also believed Moody was using Negroes employed by the State to serve "his Miss."

Time had run out for the removal of stores from Point of Fork, for von Steuben's scouts returned to the Fork the first week of June with bad news. The British were coming!

Central Virginia found that they could not count on protection from Lafayette. The French General had been playing a "cat and mouse"

game with Cornwallis as the armies moved westward from Petersburg. On May 29, he abruptly broke camp in western Hanover and headed northwest toward Fredericksburg, hoping General Anthony Wayne and his Pennsylvanians would join him there. It appeared he had turned his back on Point of Fork, but he understood that most of the military supplies there had been moved, and von Steuben and his recruits were there. At Fredericksburg was the Public Gun Factory and Hunter's Iron Works. After all, only damaged arms in the process of being repaired were at the Fork, and the Governor had notified Lafayette that over 2,000 stand of arms sent by the Continental Congress awaited him in Fredericksburg.

Cornwallis followed Lafayette to the North Anna River in western Hanover and planned his strategy. His main reason for not following Lafayette northward may have been the fact that Lafayette was expecting considerable reinforcements; however, he wrote to Sir Henry Clinton and explained, "From what I could learn of the present state of Hunter's Iron Manufactory, it did not appear of so much importance as the stores on the other side of the County." He seemed unaware of the Public Gun Factory at Fredericksburg. On June 2, he sent Lieutenant Colonel John Graves Simcoe to raid Point of Fork.

Did the Americans suffer great losses when the British raided Point of Fork? Accounts differ widely. Letters flew back and forth across the state as each authority sought to place the blame for those losses.

Von Steuben had sent "the principal part" of the Continental stores to the south side of the James — Prince Edward, Charlotte and Halifax Court Houses. In his own defense he stated:

[The stores] of the State were dispersed everywhere. A great part of them were at the Fork by order of the Government.

The Marquis' retreat induced me to represent to Colo. Davis and Mr. Moss, Agents for this State the necessity of removing them higher up in the mountain. I told them that the troops were by no means destined to guard the stores; but that I should move them as circumstances might direct. Great part of the stores were accordingly removed and . . . those which by the negligence of their officers fell into the Enemies hands were very inconsiderable.

After Von Steuben moved his men and equipment across the Fluvanna River he helped the Commissary:

That evening Colo. Davis arrived to secure the State Stores to which I gave every assistance in my power. I unloaded the waggons of the Regiment and sent them to bring away the stores but this business was very illy executed by the State Officers.

Many people blamed von Steuben for the losses at Point of Fork, and considering all that he had done for America, that seems a shame. He had travelled all over the colonies training farmers and tradesmen to be

soldiers. Without him, America would have had an undisciplined army to fight the Revolution.

Simcoe, in his account of the action at Point of Fork, written some years later, made this claim:

There were destroyed at the Point of Fork, two thousand five hundred stand of arms, a large quantity of gunpowder, case shot, &c., several casks of saltpetre, sulphur, and brimstone, and upwards of sixty hogsheads of rum and brandy, several chests of carpenters' tools, and upwards of four hundred intrenching tools, with casks of flints, sail cloth and waggons, and a great variety of small stores, necessary for the equipment of cavalry and infantry: such linen and necessities, as would be of immediate service were divided among the captors. There were taken off, a thirteen-inch mortar, five brass eight-inch mortar, five eight-inch howitzers, and four long brass nine pounders, mounted afterwards at York Town: all French pieces in excellent order.

Lord Cornwallis reported at the time to Sir Henry Clinton: "Simcoe . . . destroyed there, and at the places adjacent, about three thousand stands of arms, most of which unserviceable, but then under repair, some salt, harness, etc. and about one hundred and fifty barrels of powder." The two accounts certainly do not agree.

When Lafayette wrote Major-General Greene on June 27, he said little: "Our loss at the Point of Fork chiefly consisted of old arms out of repair, and cannon, most of which have been since recovered." (Some accounts claim the Americans sank some cannons in the James River and later retrieved them.)

Among Jefferson's papers was found a memorandum listing items lost at Point of Fork in June, 1781:

68 boxes of coarse cloth, 60 pair leather breeches, 1 small bale linen, belonging to Col. Washington's cavalry, 2000 yards canvas, 1 Hnd. soldiers Hats, 1 box containing some Linen, Checks and Coarse thread, 2 small bales of Blankets — about 75, 2 Hogsheads of Coffee, 1 small case of Tea, 1 Box and 1 Barrell brown sugar and 40 Hnds. Tierces and Barrells of rum and Whiskey.

Perhaps not all the canvas was lost, for Ross wrote three weeks later:

Finding no assistance could be obtained from the military in saving 84 pks of canvass, I brot 2 canoes down the River that night after our troops went away and loaded them, one with canvass and the other with Bacon of my own. I have saved about 70 old pks of canvass . . .

Ross wrote Patrick Henry at Staunton on June 18:

. . . You have no doubt heard of our proceedings at this place. We have obtained no great credit and suffered very great loss. I have suffered greatly. I am trying to get my plantations in

the way of making a little bread — the whole army were encamped at my estate and subsisted upon it whilst here besides they destroyed everything in their power . . .

On June 28 Ross wrote Colonel Davies:

. . . I could say much of my own distress and misfortune but that of our country is at present alarming and obscures all private losses. People have their own opinions in the matters. The Baron is much blamed this way, he's curs'd by men, women and children . . .

I saved considerable quantity of iron at this place and nail rod, gun barrels and gun locks — a number of old arms, spades, shovels, pick axes and some canvass and Brimstone has been got out of the River. All the powder left on Cobbs Hill [on the Cumberland side of the River], 15 or 16 barrls is saved. I think the Country people stole as much or more than the British destroyed and had the Enemy continued 10 days longer amongst us, I have reason to believe a number of our people would have broke in upon their neighbor's property.

You've no doubt heard that all the stores at J. Ware's [Seven Islands] was destroyed — this is a disagreeable situation for amongst other evils, the small pox has broke out in different parts of my estate.

The raid at Point of Fork did not completely cripple the Commissary, for Colonel William Davies, who had worked so hard to coordinate the care and distribution of the supplies, hardly paused to draw breath before he wrote the new Governor, General Thomas Nelson, on June 25:

Mr. Ford who was the undertaker of the works at Point of Fork now waits on your Excellency to be directed . . . whether he shall prosecute or abandon the public designs at that place. The enemy destroyed the barracks that had been erected there but left the blacksmith shops untouched, as well as the frame of the Armoury which was raised and ready for covering in —

The place has many advantages of situation, except the single circumstance of its being possible that the enemy may visit it, tho I think that's not probable, especially as the buildings cannot for a while be very extensive.

The War Office soon issued a warrant for 50,000 pounds in favor of Mr. Milton Ford "for carrying on the public works under his directions," and before a year had ended the State was planning three substantial buildings at Point of Fork: a new magazine, an arsenal, and a brick building for the superintendent.

Nor was Governor Thomas Nelson unduly upset by the raid at Point of Fork. He even made sport of the British when he wrote to General George Washington on July 27:

The very extraordinary Manuvre of Lord Cornwallis into this Country and his running up and down part of it will, I

suppose, make a great noise In Europe.

Nelson does not mention Simcoe but says of Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton's raid on Charlottesville:

Tarleton by sudden excursions into these parts of the Country that he knew were not in arms has collected a number of Horses that have enabled him to run about paroling citizens whom he has taken in their beds.

Lord Cornwallis has marched thru the Carolinas and part of Virginia which may give him great eclat but as soon as we collected such a force as would enable us to oppose him, he faced about and retreated with the greatest precipitation.

That they have done great injury both public and private is certain, but I have the consolation that he is further from the conquest of Virginia than when he entered it. I do not believe 10 men have joined him, which must mortify him not a little. They have made Whigs of Tories!

Governor Nelson was delighted that Washington had sent Lafayette to command the troops in Virginia. "You could not have made the militia of Virginia happier than by sending the Marquis to take command here. They have great confidence in his bravery and conduct." So great was their confidence that the Commissary once again collected their scattered supplies at Point of Fork to support him. The carpenters returned to continue the building; Mr. Anderson, the armorer, returned; and David Ross found the proper wood for 5,000 gun stocks to repair and manufacture guns to equip Lafayette's men at the victory at Yorktown.

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The Fluvanna County Historial Society was founded in 1964 to collect and preserve manuscripts and other documents relating to the history of Fluvanna County in Virginia; to maintain the Old Stone Jail at the county seat, Palmyra, as a museum where antiquities of the county may be exhibited; and to encourage historical research.

Members will be notified of all meetings of the Society. Annual dues are: Single Membership, \$5.00; Family Membership, \$7.00; and Contributing Membership, \$10.00. A life membership is \$100. A bulletin is published twice a year, distributed to members free of charge. Copies can be purchased for \$2.00 single copy; \$3.00 double copy. Readers are requested to contribute any information of historical interest they may have or may be able to obtain. The Society will endeavor to publish as much of this information as may be possible.

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